

Another Treason

by Mosgem

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Summary: When Otto and Laura are kidnapped by Chief Dekker, they realize she's up to something. After Raven rescues them, they have to race to save Doctor Nero from the security Chief. Contains Ottra.

1. The secret passage

Otto

"That doesn't looked good," Otto murmured, glancing up from the book he was reading to see security chief Dekker walk buy, a heavy silver briefcase in her arm.

"Ja, that is being very suspicious," Franz agreed from next to him. Otto scanned the area around him. Besides his other friend Nigel Darkdoom, there was no one else present in the massive library H.I.V.E had.

"Come on, let's go," Otto said, snapping the book closed and standing up. Nigel looked at him, surprised.

"Where are we going?" the slight boy inquired, carefully marking his page before closing it. Otto had a determined look in his eye.

"We're going to see what she's up too," he said, jerking his thumb in the direction of Chief Dekker, who was still marching quickly and quietly through the library.

"That is not sounding like the best of ideas," Franz said nervously. "Remind me again why I would be going that place again?"

"Because the library is _fun!_" Otto and Nigel exclaimed together as they cut between rows of shelving. Otto was doing his best to stay quiet but Franz clearly hadn't caught onto the whole 'staying under

the radar' approach of finding out what Dekker was doing.

"Franz, the idea is to not be noticed," Nigel said, exasperated, as Franz crashed noisily into a book shelf, sending volumes crashing down.

"Sorry," the overweight German boy muttered, face reddening. "I am being silent now."

"Good," Otto said, rolling his eyes in exasperation. "What happened to 'silent death'?"

"Well, you see the acoustics of the library and the simulation area are being quite different, so the way the noise will be projected is different" Franz rambled, but Otto sharply held up a hand to silence him. Dekker had reached a blank section in the wall. Looking around to check no one was watching, she pressed her palm against the solid metal wall. To the three boys' astonishment, the wall slid smoothly opened and Dekker stepped inside, the wall sliding shut behind her.

"Whoa," Nigel breathed.

"That wasn't on any of the plans for the school," Otto said, his brow furrowed. There was something really suspicious about the way the Dekker was acting. Pulling his Blackbox from his pocket, he called up H.I.V. .

"Hello, Otto. How may I help you?" the A.I asked politely. Otto and H.I.V. had been through a lot in Otto's years at H.I.V.E.

"Hey, H.I.V. . Can you tell me about any passages in this hall?"

"There are two different routes away from the hall you are currently in," the A.I replied after a second. Otto was getting more and more worried.

"What about any secret passages?"

"I don't understand," H.I.V. inquired. "Secret passages?"

"Um passages only the staff would be allowed to access. Somewhere hidden."

"There are no such pathways," H.I.V. said. Otto sighed.

"Alright," Otto grumbled. "Thank you, H.I.V. ." He put his Blackbox away.

"Well?" Nigel asked. Otto shook his head.

"According to H.I.V. , there's nothing there." He looked unconvinced.

"Well, maybe the Chief will be coming out somewhere near the kitchen," Franz said hopefully. "I am volunteering to be checking there."

"No," Otto snapped. He closed his eyes and reached out with his

uncanny ability to detect and interface with machines. He immediately found the palm scanner chief Dekker used to enter the room and in less than a minute had convinced it that he really had scanned his hand and it really had been the correct palm. The door slid opened.

"Otto, you are being magical?" Franz asked in wonder. Otto smirked.

"Yes Franz, I am magical," he chuckled. "Now start walking in there, or I'll curse you so you can never eat chocolate again."

The look in Franz's eyes clearly said there was no worse punishment possible and he started walking down the dark hallway, with Otto and Nigel right behind. The door rumbled closed.

Nigel and Franz, although they were great friends, would not have been his first picks to accompany him on a wild goose chase after the chief of security. He would probably have taken Wing, his closest friend, or Raven, although the remorseless assassin still scared him. Shelby, incase they got locked up somewhere, would have been handy, and Laura, for more than one reason than oneâ€¦

"Otto?" Franz whispered as they came to an opened door. They could hear voices from inside the room it opened up to. "What will we be doing?"

"Staying silent," Otto whispered back. He closed his eyes and tried to sense, through the machinery, what was going on in there.

Almost immediately, there was a blinding pain in his temple and he collapsed on the ground.

Laura

_Come on, Brand, _Laura growled to herself, staring at the security barrier on her computer. She typed a few more commands, but the seemingly impenetrable barrier just deflected her attempts to get through it.

She needed Otto for this. With his special abilities, he could brush aside even the most complicated encryption and security barriers without a thought.

"What are you doing, Brand?" Shelby asked, stepping into the room.

"Slamming my head against the desk," Laura answered, glaring at her monitor.

"For a second, let's just pretend I care," Shelby said, leaning over her shoulder. "What's all this about?"

"Well," Laura explained, her eyes never leaving the computer as her fingers danced across the keyboard. "I was following Otto on his Blackboxâ€¦"

"Hold on a second," Shelby grinned. "You were following lover-boy from inside your room? I know you've had a crush on him for like three years now, but that's just creepy."

"Shut up, Shel!" Laura snapped, her face flaming red. "It wasn't like that!"

"Mhmm," Shelby said with an arched eyebrow. "Continue."

Her face still flushed a deep shade of scarlet, Laura explained. "I was just seeing where he was because I was wondering if he wanted to go to the computer lab and work on something."

"Interesting first date," Shelby commented. Laura pretended she didn't hear.

"So I saw him with Franz and Nigel, headed away from the library, when they justâ€¦ disappeared."

"They disappeared?" Shelby asked skeptically. Laura nodded.

"It was like they walked right through the wall," she said, obviously confused. "So I did a scan, and came up with some really secure computer programs in the area."

Before Shelby could say anything, the door slid open again and Wing walked in. "Hello, Laura," he greeted her. "Have you been running? Your face looks rather red."

Shelby sniggered but didn't say anything. Laura explained what had happened to Wing, who got a look of deep concern on his face.

"We should notify Doctor Nero," he said. "He would want to know about this 'secret passage'."

"We could do that," Laura agreed, sharing a sly look with Shelby.

"Or, we could find this hidden door ourselves and go after Otto," Shelby grinned. Wing looked at them and sighed.

"I suppose I would be required to come along?"

"Come on, big guy," Selby said, grabbing his wrist and pulling him out of the tiny room they were in. "We have a day to save." They hurried out of the accommodation area to where Laura had apparently seen Otto, Nigel and Franz disappear into the wall.

"This is it?" Wing asked, stopping outside a bland section of the wall. Laura nodded. Wing pressed his hand against the wall and leaned into it.

The wall suddenly bleeped and Wing jumped away, surprised. "What was that?"

"It's a palm scanner," Laura breathed, leaning in and squinting at the wall. Sure enough, there was a small area that was a different shade of grey. "I told you, Shel."

"Stalking Otto on your computer is still creepy."

"I wasn't stalking him!" Laura protested. "I was finding out where he was so that we could go to the computer lab together!"

"Isn't that what you would call a 'date'?" Wing asked with a straight face. Shelby sniggered from behind him.

"Can it," Laura ordered, going to work on the palm scanner. It took her less than five minutes to get the door to slide open.

A huge shape burst from the darkness and attacked her.

2. A lot of talking

**So, i know it's been, like, fourteen hours since i last uploaded the first part, but i have nothing to do and a lot of ideas for this story so i'm going ahead and publishing the thing right now.
**

Another thing i have to point out is that the computer changes H.I.V. to H.I.V. for some reason. just saying

* * *

><p>Otto's eyes snapped open and he sat up quickly, slamming heads with Laura as he bolted upright.<p>

"Honestly!" the striking redhead exclaimed, reeling away. Guiltily, Otto looked around. He was in the accommodation block, with Nigel, Franz, Wing, Shelby and Laura all standing around him. The lights were dimmed. "What is it with people and hitting me today?"

"Sorry, Laura," Otto said, blinking as the last of the headache began to fade. "What happened? Did I get hit by a sleeper?"

"We were being the spies," Franz said nervously. "And then you just passed out. I was thinking it would not be a good place to do that."

The events of the last few hours all came rushing back to Otto. "Dekker!" he said. "She's planning something." Noticing the large purple bruise that covered much of Laura's forehead, he asked her what happened.

"Franz is what happened," Laura answered dryly. She explained how they had disappeared into the wall, how Laura, Wing and Shelby had gone to save them, how Laura had opened the secret door only to have Franz charge at her and knock her into the wall. Only when she was done did Otto speak up.

"Soâ€¦| you were tracking me on my Blackbox?"

Shelby burst out laughing, Laura's face turned crimson and even Wing cracked a tiny smile. "That was my conclusion as well, Otto," Shelby assured him.

Otto tried to pretend it was nothing. "I was trying to connect with the computers that Dekker was using," he said thoughtfully.

"And then you collapsed," Nigel, who hadn't said anything yet, commented. "It was like you got punched in the head."

"It was some sort of electromagnetic pulse," Otto replied. "As soon as I tried to interface with the machines it knocked me out."

"So whomever we're dealing withâ€"

"Dekker."

"Knows about your ability and doesn't want you to be looking through their personal information," Wing finished. Otto looked thoughtful.

"The only person who knew how to do that wasâ€" he stopped abruptly.

"Overlord," Shelby finished. "Who was completely destroyed and consumed by nanites, I might add."

A quick, pained look flashed across Otto's face as the vivid memory of Lucy Dexter popped into his head, but he blocked it out.

"That may be so," Wing countered. "But how many times have we thought Overlord dead, only for him to re-appear again?"

"Three or four," Otto said absent-mindedly. His mind was still trying to work out what chief Dekker was up to, what was in that silver case. Leave it to me to get caught up in this, Otto thought with a smirk. He did seem to be cursed with the ability to not only find trouble but to get caught up in the middle of it. Every scheme that H.I.V.E had faced over the years had involved him in some way.

That was mostly because he was Overlord's clone, built to hold the homicidal A.I and let him interface with other machines. Knowing that he hadn't been born, but made, still gave Otto a weird feeling, like he didn't belong.

"Penny for them," Laura said, noting the lost look on Otto's face, something he had been doing a lot lately.

"Nothing," he said, forcing a smile. "Justâ€ wondering how it always is that we seem to attract trouble."

"Aye, it does seem to just appear around us," Laura agreed. Shelby, hearing their conversation, scoffed loudly.

"_Us?"_ She asked incredulously. "Don't you mean bullet-magnet-Malpense?"

"Hey," Otto said, feigning being hurt. "That's not fair. It's not always bullets."

"Oh, you're right," Laura giggled. "The flesh-eating nanites and crazed assassins are so much better." She grabbed a spluttering Otto by the hand. "Come on, Malpense. I have something I want to show you in the computer lab."

"What do you think about this?" Otto asked tiredly, rubbing his eyes and laying back in his bed.

"I think it is another instance where you have managed to drag us into trouble," Wing smiled. "But I must admit, I am interested to

learn what Chief Dekker is doing."

"She never liked us much," Otto nodded. He ran a hand through his messy white hair.

"So what were you and Laura working on?" Wing asked as he climbed into bed.

"Not much," Otto said doggedly. "Just a little project for fun. Noticing the little grin on Wing's face, he sighed. "Not you as well! It's bad enough I can't even talk to her without Shelby staring at me the whole time."

"I am sorry, my friend," Wing said, doing his best not to smirk. "If you were to ask her out, that might solve your problem though."

Otto didn't answer, just mentally turned off the light and rolled over in his bed. Besides the faint but consistent blue power lights coming off of their computers the room was dark, which was fine by Otto.

Could he ask out Laura? She was pretty, no doubt, but they had been friends for so long. He didn't want to do anything to ruin that.

On the other hand, when he thought of her striking green eyes or the way she laughed whenever he did something stupid he could feel his insides clench. No one, besides Lucy, had made him feel like that.

Eventually, despite the thoughts racing around his head and Wing's chainsaw snoring, he fell asleep, waking up the next morning to his insistently bleeping Blackbox. He groggily rolled out of bed, showered and got dressed, before heading down for breakfast and sitting at their usual table, where Shelby and Laura were already there. Shelby had a wide grin on her face and Laura's face was somewhere between embarrassed and mad.

"Shh!" she said as Otto slid into the seat opposite from them, Wing right behind him. The Albino raised his eyebrows questioningly.

"Nothing," Laura said hurriedly. Otto smirked but didn't say anything. "What are we going to do about it? You know what?"

"I was thinking today after school we'd go back to the place," Otto whispered back. "And then we could send our project in and see what it can find."

"I must admit, I am dying to know what this project is," Wing said curiously.

"Knowing these two, it could be anything from an attack drone fitted with nuclear warheads to a mosquito that collects video feed," Shelby grunted.

"Sadly, it's neither," Laura said, sharing a grin with Otto. "But thanks to mister low-morale here, it does have laser cannons though."

"Sweet!" Shelby laughed. "Laser cannons are always a good thing."

"I agree," Otto nodded. "That's why we have them."

A tap on his shoulder distracted him from the conversation. He spun around and went stiff as he recognized chief Dekker standing there, her hand hovering around her sleeper pistol.

"Hello, Mister Malpense," she said with a frightening smile. "I'm going to have to ask you to come with me."

* * *

><p>Well? did you like it? i know not much happened but that's going to change soon, dont worry.

3. Trapped

**Okay, so first of all, thank you to everyone who reads/reviews my storiesâ€" it means a lot to me. Second, i realize the story is going pretty slow, but bare with me here. stuff will start happening soon.
**

i'm fairly sure i found a way to stop my computer from changing our favourite A.I to a disease (HIVEmind to H.I.V .), although i can't be sure.

Enjoy!

* * *

><p>Otto and Chief Dekker walked though the deserted hallways of H.I.V.E. All the students were at breakfast and the underground school was silent, except the echoing footsteps of Otto and the Security Chief.<p>

"May I ask where we're going?" Otto said, worry building inside of him. Chief Dekker didn't answer, just stared straight ahead, hand tightly clutching her sleeper gun. Otto had been hit with one of those before and wasn't keen on repeating the process.

They came to a secure door. Chief Dekker entered a security code, but to Otto's delight it didn't open.

"Good Morning, Chief Dekker," HIVEmind said politely, appearing on the screen next to the door. "It would appear your access for this area has been revoked temporarily.

"You!" Dekker yelled, wheeling to face Otto. He backed up warily but couldn't stop a cheeky grin from spreading across his face.

"I couldn't have done it, could I have now?" he smiled. "I haven't touched my Blackbox since you took me from my breakfast."

"Don't think I don't know about yourâ€| abilities," Dekker hissed. She turned to the door again. "HIVEmind, please open up the door."

The A.I tipped his head to the side, which Otto knew meant he was using a considerable portion of his core processing power to solve

the problem.

"Access revoked," he said. Dekker's face was turning red.

"What do you mean, access revoked?" Dekker steamed. "I got through all of the other doors perfectly fine."

"It would appear someone is blocking your access to this part of the school," HIVEmind said, keeping up the polite exterior, but Otto saw the ghost of a smile on his face.

"Well, who is that?" Dekker said, annoyed. HIVEmind paused for a second.

"That section of my log file has been erased," he said eventually. Otto couldn't help it. He burst out laughing.

_Brand, you genius, _he thought to himself. Laura was the only person in the school that would have known where he was going and known how to block Dekker from getting there.

Suddenly, the bell sounded for classes to start. Kids started to flood the hallways, earning Otto a lot of curious looks as he stood there with Chief Dekker. Otto saw Laura, who was furiously typing away on her Blackbox. She looked up and saw the pair of them.

"Miss Brand," Dekker called out just as Laura was about to step into the classroom. "Would you come here for a moment?"

Hesitantly, Laura stepped back from her class and walked towards them, dread written over her face. Dekker held out her hand and Laura put the Blackbox in it.

"Would you care to explain to me what this is?" Dekker asked triumphantly, turning the Blackbox around and shoving it in Laura's face. Slowly, a smile started to form. Despite the situation, Otto felt his heart skip as Laura's smile turned into a full-blown grin.

"Um, solitaire?" she said. "I was playing it as I walked to class."

Surprised, Dekker spun the Blackbox around and stared at the screen. Laura winked at Otto, who mouthed _thank you_.

"It seems I was mistaken," Dekker said eventually, giving the Blackbox back to Laura. "I apologize."

"That's alright," Laura said brightly. "Can I go to my class now?"

"I'm afraid not," Dekker said, stepping back and bringing the sleeper up, leveling it with Laura's head. "I need you to open this door for me, Miss Brand." She smiled viciously. "Quickly now, and no fuss or both of you get shot."

* * *

><p>"Where do you think they are?" Shelby as her and Wing hurried to the tactical education department. Wing looked

thoughtful.<p>

"Knowing Otto, nowhere good," he said after a moment. "But do no worry. I am sure he will get out of it soon."

"I'm not so sure," Shelby frowned. "Dekker is pretty dangerous."

"Shelby," Wing said seriously. "This is Otto Malpense we are talking about. Has there ever been a situation where he hasn't escaped?"

"Wellâ€|" Shelby trailed off. "Our first year, he couldn't escape the schoolâ€| and, umâ€| well, that's it."

"Exactly," Wing nodded. Seeing Shelby was still not happy, he sighed. "Fine. If they're not back by tonight, we go and find them."

"Great," Shelby beamed, going up on her tiptoes and kissing Wing. "Now come on, we've got a class to go to." She walked off, leaving a stunned but pleased Wing standing there.

* * *

><p>"Home sweet home," Dekker sneered, shoving Otto into the tiny cell first. It contained a chair, a water fountain and a little stool.<p>

Laura was next, stumbling inside and almost running into the back wall. The door slammed shut with a clang.

"Well," Otto said. "This isn't good."

"Aye, you really did it this time, Malpense," Laura grinned. She really wasn't that worried about their position; Wing or Shelby would come to get them, and if not their absence would be noticed. "Can't you just open the door and get us out of here?"

"I told you," Otto said. "There's an electronic impulse around this place. If I try to get access to the computers, I black out."

"Oh," Laura said, disappointed. "So I guess we're stuck in here then."

"Yeah," Otto said, looking around. "There's not much to do." He squatted on the little footstool.

Laura studied his face. The spiky white hair and piercing blue eyes that she new so well. He caught her looking and smiled at her. She looked away quickly, blushing.

Laura considered their options. Dekker had taken both their Blackbox's, so there was no way they could get out of the cell electronically. There was no lock on the door, and even if there had been, neither Laura nor Otto knew how to pick it.

"Looks like we're stuck here," she said. Otto, who had been studying the cell himself, had just reached the same solution. There was no way out.

"What about theâ€" "

"If you suggest the ventilation shaft I will never talk to you again," Laura snapped, and Otto shut up quickly. "Besides, have you even looked at it?" she pointed to up at the roof, where Otto could see it was barely ten centimeters wide.

"Oh," he frowned. "Then I guess there really is no way out. At least the companies not bad," he smiled. It took Laura a second to realize what he was saying. When she did she turned away to hide her blushing.

_Just tell him that you like him. Now's the perfect time. _

_ Oh yeah, locked in a cell, very romantic. You could go on a date in the right-hand sideâ€|. _

Laura grit her teeth and tried to silence the voices in her head. She _didn't_ like Otto, or at least that's what she would keep telling herself until the stupid guy took a hint and asked her out.

Not that she wanted that or anything. It wasn't like she lay up at night imagining what it would be like to date him, or purposefully brushed shoulders with him every time they were in the halls, or spending all of her free time with him.

"Laura?" Otto asked, breaking her messed-up thoughts. "I asked you something."

"Sorry," Laura said, embarrassed. "What did you say?"

"I asked if I should try to get us out of here," Otto smirked. "Like, with my abilities."

"Won't that knock you out?" Laura asked, concerned. Otto shrugged.

"If I know what's coming I might be able to hold it off long enough to cause some sort of trouble for our friend Dekker," Otto said with a mischievous grin, one that Laura had come to know over the years. She sighed.

"What?" Otto questioned.

"That's the look you always get before you do something incredibly stupid, usually to help someone else," Laura told him, half amused, half worried.

"I'll be fine," Otto scoffed. Laura weighed the options. She didn't want to do anything that would put Otto in danger, but on the other hand, it might be their only hope of getting out of this cage.

"Fine, go for it," she sighed. "Just don't do anything stupid."

"Me, stupid?" Otto laughed. "Of course I'm going to do something stupid." Then he sat down on the stool, closed his eyes, and entered the world on computers.

* * *

><p>"Still no sign of them," Shelby said, craning her neck to look around the busy dining hall, looking for the distinctive white hair off Otto or the Laura's bright red.<p>

"I told you not to worry," Wing said, although he too had nerves ebbing away at his mind. Wing never got nervous, but he was worried about Otto now. Otto had been the first real friend he had ever had. They had been through a lot together, some of which Wing wished he could erase from his mindâ€" there had been some pretty nasty moments in his past.

"You sad we could look for them," Shelby said, glancing at the large clock on the wall. "We need to go soon."

"When it's dark," Wing said firmly. "We can't be noticed, Shelby. And do you even know how we are going to get into Chief Dekker's hidden passage?"

"Trip scanners," Shelby said confidently. Wing raised his eyebrows.

"Are you becoming like Otto and Laura?" he asked, a tiny smile playing on his lips.

"No!" Shelby yelled quickly. "But it was Otto and Laura's latest project that they made and she wouldn't stop talking about it. It's a little gizmo that you attach to a retina scanner, finger scanner, whatever, and it opens it up for you."

"I take it you made the mistake of asking how it works?" Wing smirked.

"Hour long explanation of handshake codes and some other thing I wasn't paying attention to," Shelby sighed.

"So you know where to get one of these?" Wing asked. Shelby grinned.

"They're in the Science and Technology department," she smiled. "It wont even be fun."

"I can alert Raven of your location," Wing offered. "That might make it more exciting for you."

"Don't you dare," Shelby gasped. "I will never talk to you again."

"I suggest you go get theseâ€| trip scanners," Wing advised, nodding towards the staff table, where Professor Pike was eating. "While the Science and Technology department is empty."

* * *

><p>Almost immediately, there was a sharp, stabbing pain in Otto's head. He grit his teeth (or more, imagined gritting his teeth; the whole in-but-out of body thing that HIVEmind had described to him still made no sense) and tried to ignore the pain.<p>

Sinking lower into the grid of flashing lights, Otto tried to concentrate and find the opening for the door. Whatever security systems Dekker had up protecting it were extremely advanced, but Otto just brushed them aside causally.

He was about to flip the mental switch that would guarantee his and Laura's freedom when something else caught his eye. It was a white cable that pulsed with blue light. The mystery cable wove its way through the different glowing machinery parts, disappearing out of sight.

The pain in Otto's head was intensifying, a blinding, stabbing pain that clouded his thoughts. Whatever he was going to do, he needed to do it quickly, before the pain completely knocked him out. The switch for the door was right there, but Otto's instincts were screaming at him to follow the blue cable.

Otto took one step forwards towards the cable, intending to follow it, but a fresh wave of pain flowed into his head, forcing him onto one knee. He stared at the white cable, watching the blue light pulsate along it, and suddenly realized what it was. It was a connection to H.I.V.E's central core hub, a direct link to HIVEmind and all of his functions. Dekker had straight access right into the center of H. .

They had to get out of here to stop her. Otto turned on his heel, took one step towards the switch to open the door, and flipped it.

Then he let the pain overcome him and blacked out, thankful for the relief unconsciousness brought.

* * *

><p>Well? what did you guys think? i know, just like the last chapter, not much happens in it, but i'm working on that.

**if you guys have anything you want to say, or anything you want to happen, review. if you dont have anything you want to say, or anything you want to happen, review anyways. **

the more reviews i get, the faster i update!

4. Rescue attempt

DONT throw things at me!

I realize it's been forever since i uploaded (a whole two weeks), but i kinda sorta have an excuseâ€” i've been at gymnastics for 30 hours a week, and at my sisters horse shows.

anyways, here it isâ€” chapter four. i stepped up the fluffiness between Otto and Laura, and there's a bit of Winglby as well. enjoy!

* * *

><p>Shelby took out the miniature screwdriver from her pocket and

quickly twisted off the two screws holding the cover over the ventilation duct closed. The swung down and Shelby rolled out of the duct, landing silently on her feet.<p>

The science and technology department was dimly lit. Shelby looked around at the various computers, desks, half-finished projects and locked cabinets. She had never really liked going hereâ€” it was all boring to herâ€” but Otto and Laura loved it.

Otto and Laura. After all this time, she still couldn't believe that Otto was obtuse enough not to notice that Laura liked him. She had seen guys be oblivious before, but Otto had reached a whole new level.

Focusing on the task at hand, Shelby tried to remember where the trip scanners were. Otto and Laura had been so proud when they invented them. Even Professor Pike had been impressed when he saw them.

They were based on what Otto called a 'handshake code'â€” a sort of way to greet a machine. He often used it when interfacing with other computers, and with a bit of modification they managed to re-create it so when you put it on a palm scanner, it tricked the machine into believing that you had, in fact, pressed your hand against the scanner and been granted access.

Shelby came to a small cabinet on one side of the room labeled _Otto & Laura_. _Shelby grinned in triumph, before realizing that, instead of an old-fashion lock, Laura had installed a fingerprint scanner. Cursing, Shelby looked around the room for anything that would help her get through. There were probably several things in the room that would let Shelby through, but she new how to use none of them. Now she wished she had paid attention during some of Professor Pike's lessons.

The lock rattling at the door sent Shelby spinning around. She judged the distance between herself and the ventilation shaft, realizing that she couldn't make it through before the door opened. She needed a place to hide, and she needed it _now_.

* * *

><p>"Wing, why are you being all alone?"<p>

Wing looked up and saw Franz standing there, a tray piled high with food in his hands and Nigel at his side.

"Ohâ€”um, Otto and Laura left," Wing said uneasily. "They said they had to do something together."

"Ah," Franz said, nodding wisely. "I am thinking they should be dating by now, _ja?_"

"Everyone seems to think so," Wing agreed with a small smile. He had known Otto for long enough to be able to read him, and it was clear to Wing that his friend liked Laura. Why he didn't ask her out was a mystery to Wing, even though there were a limited number of date options at H.I.V.E.

"And where is Shelby being?" Franz asked, looking up from where he was attacking his plate with gusto.

"Erâ€|" Wing struggled for an excuse. "She had a headache. She went back up to her room early."

"Is she alright?" Nigel inquired. Wing merely nodded, wondering himself where Shelby was and if she was going to appear soon. He couldn't help but worry about her, even though he knew Shelby was more than capable of getting a couple of trip scanners from the Science and Technology lab. Before coming to H.I.V.E, she had been the Wraith, the worlds most infamous jewel robber, who could seemingly get through the tightest security with ease. Getting a trip scanner would be nothing for Shelby.

Franz continued to chatter on to Wing's deaf ears. He was worried about Otto and Laura, he was worried about Shelby, and, for the first time since he came to H.I.V.E, Wing felt alone.

* * *

><p>"Otto?"<p>

The voice sounded small and far away. Otto floated in and out of conscious, aware only of the hard stone floor beneath him and the pounding pain in his temple.

"Otto?"

Who was talking? They had a sweet voice, with a faint accentâ€| Otto was in too much pain to try to figure out where it was from. All he was aware of was the pain in his head.

Then another pain, a sharp, stinging mark on his cheek.
"Otto!"

Gasping, Otto's eyes flew open and he sat up, but this time, Laura was ready. She dodged to the side, avoiding getting hit in the head again. Otto looked around, blinking in confusion. The door was still closed.

"Didn't I openâ€|?" he trailed off as another bolt of pain shot through his head. Groaning, he tried to remember anything passed reassuring Laura that he would be fine if he tried to open the door.

"You've been out for two hours," the redhead smirked. "The door was opened for about ten seconds until Chief Dekker noticed and closed it."

"Well that didn't work," Otto said, collapsing back against the wall and running a hand through his mess of spiky white hair.

"Are you alright?" Laura asked. Otto rubbed the sore spot on his cheek.

"Almost," he answered, smirking. "Did you really have to slap me?"

"You wouldn't wake up," Laura said, blushing. "Sorry."

"It's alright," Otto smiled. "I understand. I just wish we could have

gotten out of here."

"It was kind of hard with Dekker pointing a gun at me," Laura said, frustrated. "And I hate not being able to do anything."

"It's okay," Otto told her soothingly. "Shelby and Wing will come to get us. You know what they're like. Dekker won't know what hit her."

Laura just nodded, suddenly looking Otto straight in the eye. They were a clear, sharp blue, one she had seen many times but never really appreciated. "I need to tell you something."

"Yeah?" Otto asked, sitting up and looking back into her eyes. "So do I."

"You first," Laura smirked immediately. Otto grinned at her, making her stomach flutter.

"Not a chance," he said. "You told me first, so you say it first."

"Fine," Laura huffed. Otto leaned forwards and smiled at her, waiting patiently as she gathered her courage.

"It'sâ€" Laura hesitated. She could tell him right now, just tell her how she felt about him. Just three simple words: _I like you._ Four easy, quick words, and the secret she had been holding in for three years would be out. Now would be a perfect time, just the two of them in this cell. As she looked at his face, she wanted nothing more than to lean in and kiss him, right then, right there. It would just feel soâ€" _right, _after all this time, to finally be with him.

Otto waited, feeling anxiety building up in him. He was going to do it. Right here, right now. He was going to say it: three simple words that he should have said long ago. Every time he thought something had happened to Laura, every time he saw her in danger, he felt a gut-wrenching fear that he would never get to tell her. Tell her something he had known, from the moment he first saw her, that was true.

I love you.

It would be so simple to say. He could feel it on the tip of his tongue. All he had to do was open his mouth, and the words would roll off, and she would know. He found himself staring at her, her bright green eyes, vibrant red hair, the soft, perfect lines of her face.

"Iâ€"I'm just glad you're here," Laura said at length. Otto felt his spirits plunged. For a fleeting second, he thought he had recognized the look on her face, thought that maybe she was going to say she felt the same way about him.

She doesn't love you. She doesn't.

He let the words stab him, knowing they were probably true. They could still be friends, at least. That was something.

"What about you?" Laura asked. She had been about to say itâ€”really, she hadâ€” but then she thought better of it. Otto didn't like her like that. He _couldn't_. "What were you going to say?"

"Ohâ€”Ermâ€”| nothing, I guess." He shook his head. "It's not important."

"Otto," Laura said, scooting closer to him. "Tell me. It had to be something."

"Nothing," Otto mumbled, and Laura noticed he looked sad, disappointed even. "Really, it's nothing."

"Are you sure?" Laura asked. The smile returned to Otto's face.

"Yeah," he said. "Completely sure. Now we just have to figure out how to get out of here." He gestured around the cell.

"Aye, I think that one might be a bit tricky," Laura agreed, determined to find out what Otto had meant to say. She cursed herself for not having enough courage to tell Otto how she felt.

"We've been in worse," Otto said confidently. "There were the robotic ninja assassinsâ€”| "

"The Raven-hating twinsâ€”| "

"Insane A.I.â€”| "

"Who we encountered twiceâ€”| "

"Missile-wielding psychopathâ€”| "

"Flesh eating nanitesâ€”| "

Otto and Laura shared an amused grin.

"So I'm not overly terrified of Dekker," Laura concluded. Otto smirked.

"She does have remote access to HIVEmind's core processer," Otto pointed out. Laura looked shocked at this, and Otto realized he hadn't told her yet.

Over the next ten minutes, he explained to Laura about what had happened in his out-of-body experience. She looked shocked.

"We need to get out of here."

* * *

><p>Shelby dove underneath the nearest desk as Professor Pike strolled in, humming to himself as he turned on the lights and rooted through the multiple stacks of paper on his desk.<p>

"Mind swapâ€”| mind swapâ€”| mind swapâ€”| aha!" he said happily as he found the diagram he was looking for. "Wait until Ms. Leon see's _this." _

Then he turned the lights back off and re-locked the door behind him. Shelby grinned at the thought of the Professor trying to change Ms. Leon back to her human form. It was almost weird to think of their Stealth and Evasion teacher as anything _but_ a feline, which just showed how weird her life had become in three years.

Forcing her mind back to the job at hand, Shelby tried to She was ashamed at herself for doing such a sloppy job so far at. Before coming to H.I.V.E, she had been the best jewel-robber in the world. The Science and Technology lab was nothing compared to the Louvre, and Shelby was determined not to fail.

A quick search of the lab provided a screwdriver that looked as if it would fit perfectly into the hinges of the cabinet that held her prize. She quickly undid them, keeping one eye on the task at hand and one on the door. She couldn't risk anyone coming in.

She finally undid the screws and tried to pull the door open, but it didn't work; something was holding it in place. Sighing, Shelby went over to work on the other door, aware that her short window of time was running out. Soon, dinner would be over and the chance that someone would find their way to the Science and Technology lab was high.

Taking the final screw out of the bottom hinge, Shelby quietly lowered the door" with the lock still intact" to the floor. "Sloppy, Malpense," she grinned triumphantly. She stole three of the trip scanners from the cabinet, before lifting the door pack in and painstakingly re-screwing in the hinges.

It seemed like hours later when she was done. Shelby had left fingerprints around everywhere, but she wasn't worried" no one was likely to dust for fingerprints if they saw nothing out of the ordinary. The only people who would notice something was missing were currently the people she was stealing something for. The irony was killing her.

Shelby climbed up into the ventilation shaft, screwed the cover closed behind her, and started to crawl back to the empty classroom she could drop into and meet up with Wing. They had the trip scanners; they knew where they had to go. All that was left to do was save Otto and Laura.

Shelby realized she hadn't spotted anything out of the ordinary in Otto and Laura's storage cabinet, which made her wonder what this 'project' of theirs was. She would probably find out soon enough"the two of them could never help but share their brilliance to everyone.

She dropped into the empty classroom, tucked the trip scanners in the pocket of her jumpsuit and made her way to the accommodation block. Wing was waiting for her, sitting on one of the couches, eyes closed, seemingly asleep.

Before Shelby could get close he turned around and smiled at her. She tried not to notice how handsome he was. They had a job to do.

"Did you manage to get the scanners?" Wing asked. Shelby just snorted.

"Of course I got them," She answered cockily.

"I saw the professor leave," Wind told her. "Did he go to the lab?"

"Yep," Shelby nodded. "Only for a second though. I think he figured out how to fix Ms. Leon."

The ghost of a smile played across Wing's face. "That will beâ€¦ interesting."

"That's one way to describe it," Shelby grinned. "I'm scared for the professor."

"I doubt Ms. Leon would actually harm him," Wing said, frowning slightly now like he always did when he was thinking. Shelby burst out laughing.

"Wing, you have absolutely no sense of humor," she sniggered. "Anyways, how are we going toâ€¦" she lowered her voice, even though no one was close to them. "Save Otto and Laura?"

"We need a distraction," Wing said immediately. "Something to draw Dekker away from her little hideout, so we can go in and get them."

Shelby eyed Franz and Nigel making their way across the accommodation block, chatting idly. Franz looked even more bloated than usual, probably because he had just eaten dinner. She once again broke into a grin.

"I think I've got an idea," She told Wing in an undertone. The louder: "Franz! Nigel! Over here!"

Bemused, the two boys started walking towards them. "I am having a bad feeling about this," Franz told his friend quietly. Nigel, seeing the grin on Shelby's face, nodded.

"We need your help," Shelby said when they arrived, beaming.

"Now I am really having the bad feelings about this," Franz gulped.

"We need a favor," Shelby began.

"And what have you been doing for us lately?" Franz asked suspiciously.

"Please?" Shelby asked sweetly, and they relented.

"Fine," Nigel said, speaking for the first time. "What do you want?"

"This is being the bad idea," Franz warned his friend, but he didn't leave.

"We need you guys to cause a distraction," Shelby said. "Somethingâ€¦big."

"And how would we be doing that?" Franz asked. Wing had a suggestion.

He quickly explained it to them.

"That soundsâ€¦ dangerous," Nigel said after a pause.

"Your last name is Darkdoom," Shelby told him. "Isn't _danger_ your middle name?"

"Actually, it's Phillip," Franz nodded wisely. Nigel flushed red.

"Shut up, Franz!" he snapped. His friend shook his head, as if in pity.

"Nigel, you are needing to be not keeping as many secrets," he said sternly. "People should be knowing you better."

"I don't want people to know my middle name," the slight boy scowled. "Dad didn't like it either."

"It's okay," Shelby said, stifling a grin. "Your secret is safe with us, Philip."

Even Wing smiled a bit as Nigel turned a darker shade of red. "We'll give you guys a distraction," he said, eager to change the subject. "When should we do it?"

Shelby shared a look with Wing. "How aboutâ€¦ now?"

* *
*

><p>"Otto."<p>

"Laura."

"Otto."

"Laura."

"Otto."

"Laura."

"Otto."

"Laura."

"Otto."

"Laura."

"Otto."

"Laura."

"Otto."

"Laura."

"Laura."

"Otto."

â€|

"Dammit!" Laura said. Otto grinned, leaning back against the stone wall of their cell. They had been in there for the better part of twelve hours now and both were getting bored.

"It's a stupid game anyways," Laura huffed angrily. Otto smiled.

"You're just angry because I beat you," he told her.

"Maybe."

Otto adjusted himself on the floor, trying to get comfortable against the hard rock. Dekker seemed to have forgotten about them, or she was planning on just leaving them in here until she did whatever it was she had planned.

Laura scooted closer to him and leaned her head against his shoulder. She had done this before, but for some reason Otto froze, before relaxing. He smiled at her once more.

"Tired," she yawned. She suddenly brightened with an idea. "Hey. We could call K-9!"

"He's still charging," Otto chuckled. "And we don't have the remote with us."

"True we don't have the remote," Laura agreed, a sly smile on her face. "But, I plugged him in last night, so he would be done charging by now." Otto's mouth dropped open.

"Marry me."

"Stop it, you're making me blush," Laura told him sarcastically, turning away to hide the fact that she really was blushing.

"So K-9 is all charged?"

"Yeah," Laura said, nodding. "If only we had a way to call him. I don't suppose you want toâ€|"

"No," Otto cut in. "My head still hurts from last time."

"Okay," Laura nodded. "Don't try then."

"I wasn't planning on it," Otto reassured her dryly. "And I trust Wing and Shelby to get us out of here. Don't even worry."

"How'll they do that with Dekker sitting right there?" Laura asked. "I mean, she's right outside the door, at this big computer with a gun two feet away."

"A sleeper?"

"Nope."

"Oh." Otto considered this. Finally, he shrugged. "I'm sure they'll find a way around it."

"I just hope they don't get hurt trying to save us," Laura said, biting her lip.

"This is Wing and Shelby you're talking about," Otto told her. "I'd be worried if they had to get past Raven, but other than thatâ€" he shrugged. Laura knew what he meant; the four of them had gone through a lot together since joining H.I.V.E.

"Can I ask you a question?" Laura asked. Otto pretended to think.

"Absolutely not," he said sarcastically. Laura made a face at him, which he returned. "I'm kidding. Of course. Anything."

"Okay," Laura said, and suddenly she was nervous. She didn't know whyâ€" it wasn't like _she_ was the one saying anythingâ€" but the question she was about to ask, and the possibility of the answer, made her stomach dance.

"Earlier todayâ€" when you said you had something to tell meâ€" what was it?"

"Anything but that," Otto quickly amended. Laura made another face at him.

"Come on," she said pleadingly. She moved closer to him. "Please?"

"It's nothing," Otto said. "Really, nothing at all."

"You're going have to do better than that to fool me, Malpense," Laura told him. "I've known you for too long."

"Fine," Otto relented, turning to face her. "I'll tell you. I'm going to sound really stupid and you're probably not going to talk to me for the rest of my life, but I'll tell you."

"I wouldn't do that," Laura reassured him. "Just, what is?"

"Okay." Otto took a deep breath. "I've actually been meaning to tell you this forever, because since I first met you, Iâ€" he was cut short as alarms began to blare throughout the building. Otto sat up, looking around brightly. From outside their cell door they could hear swearing, the furious tapping of keys and a loud bang.

"Sound like the cavalries here," Otto said, quickly changing the subject. "Dekker doesn't sound happy."

"Alright, Malpense," Laura smiled. "I'll let you off this time. Next time, you wont be so lucky."

* * *

><p>Nigel and Franz ran for their lives as the corridors started flashing red and the deafening alarm blared through the halls of H.I.V.E, deafening and blinding them.<p>

"I am thinking that was the above murder!" Franz yelled, waddling along as quickly as his body would allow him. Already, security forces could be seen running through the halls, yelling instructions to each other.

"Do you mean overkill?" Nigel panted, his bald head gleaming with sweat as he led Franz through the school. Wing's idea of a 'distraction'—using one of Professor Pike's laser weapons to cut open the conventional weapons lockers and the blowing a hole in Doctor Nero's study with a rocket launcher—had worked quite well, even if it meant large quantities of pain for Nigel and Franz if they got caught.

"Yes, that too," Franz nodded. They didn't look out of place, running around, because as soon as the security guards had heard the explosion a full school lockdown had been ordered.

Franz misjudged a turn and ended up slamming into the wall. He scrambled away, turned and continued running—right into chief Dekker.

"I am being the very sorry!" Franz yelled over the alarm, before freezing under Dekker's glare. "Oh—um—| I am being sorry?"

"Nice and calm now, boys," Dekker told them, drilling holes in the trembling boys with her eyes. "Back to your accommodation blocks, I presume."

"Yes," Franz said, nodding vigorously. "We have not been doing the suspicious stuff. None at all. We are being in the library, and then the alarms started going, and we will be having no idea why it is being happening, and—"

"Oh shut up," Dekker said harshly. She stared at them suspiciously for a second. "Off you go now, nice and calm."

"We will be causing no trouble," Franz said with a sincere nod. The two boys rushed forwards at a brisk walk, eager to escape Dekker. They hurried through the halls.

"You need to learn to shut up," Nigel hissed angrily to Franz as they neared the accommodation block. "Dekker almost suspected us there."

"Nigel, you are needing to stop worrying so much," Franz informed him. "I was making sure that Dekker would not be suspecting us."

"Okay," Nigel said, resigned. "Good thing you did that, or we might have been in big trouble." Franz didn't get the sarcasm.

"You see," he said. "I am being the leader here."

"Yes you are, Franz," Nigel said. "Let's just go back to the accommodation block. Our job here is done."

"Yes," Franz nodded. "We did the good job, but now it is time for us to stop."

"That's what I said," Nigel told him.

"You are needing to stop basking in your own glory, Nigel," Franz said seriously. "You are not that great."

"Iâ€" never mind." Nigel shook his head.

* * *

><p>"Looks like it worked," Shelby whispered as the corridor momentarily turned red from the lights. Wing, who had stood completely still in the shadows of the corridor, had seen Dekker run by thirty seconds prior. Wing moved stealthily through the hallways, coming up to the seemingly blank section of wall that Dekker had exited. He pulled one of the trip scanners from his pocket, pressed it against the palm scanner on the wall, and waited.<p>

There was a beep, followed by a couple of flashing lights, and the door slid open. Shelby came up beside him.

"I cannot believe that worked."

"I was doubting its efficiency as well," Wing agreed, turning on a little flashlight and stepping into the hall. No one was there, and he quickly made his way down the hall. There was another door at the end, locked.

It took Shelby three seconds to open it up. She pushed it open silently, making sure no one was inside, before gesturing for Wing to join her.

"I still think we should have used some sort of weapon," she whispered, even though there was no one around. It just felt wrong to be loud in the darkness.

"I dislike weapons," Wing said, distaste obvious in his voice. He was still troubled by the fact he had broken his vow to his motherâ€" to never kill someone. He hadn't thought of it at the time; his father was about to shoot Otto, and he was the only one who could save him. It had been almost like a reaction.

They made their way past a complicated array of computers. Shelby didn't have as large of an understanding as Otto or Laura, but she could see it was quite an impressive set up.

"When do you think Dekker will come back?" Shelby asked as they crept along, looking for any sort of prison that Otto and Laura could be held in.

"I presume she will be held up for a long time, given the disaster that Nigel and Franz provided," Wing said calmly, sweeping his flashlight across the room, exposing another door. He pressed his ear against it, hearing nothing, and signaled Shelby to unlock it.

She did, pushing it open and peeking inside and making sure no one was there. She stepped inside, looking left and right. Wing followed her.

"What are we going to do after we rescue them?" Shelby asked.

"I suggest we go to Doctor Nero and tell him," Wing said.

"After we blew up his office? I don't think he'll be happy with us," Shelby said.

"Yes, but he doesn't have to know about that," Wing argued, a slight smile on his thin lips. Shelby suddenly stopped him and stared at him.

"I'm glad you're here with me," she said, kissing him softly on the lips. He immediately froze, before wrapping his arms around Shelby and kissing her back.

"You are also my first pick to be on this mission with," Wing informed her. "Aside from Raven, perhaps."

"What!"

"Iâ€¦" Wing seemed to realize his mistake. "I merely meantâ€¦ with her fighting capabilitiesâ€¦ and her experienceâ€¦"

"It's okay," Shelby said, laughing. She kissed him again, before walking forwards again. Wing stood still for a moment, still slightly shocked, before following her.

After ten minutes of searching, they found nothing. "Dekker will be coming back soon," Wing said, concerned. He wasn't looking forwards to a fight with Dekker, but he was prepared if it happened.

"Wait. Do you hear that?" Shelby said, suddenly freezing. Wing, too, went completely still, listening.

"Wing!"

The voice was soft, but definitely there. Then another voice, this one with a definite accent:

"Shelby!"

"Over here," Wing said, moving swiftly across the room and back into the computer room. The voice called out again, seemingly from behind the wall. Shelby walked over to where it was coming from and ran her hand along the wall.

"Right here," she said. "Wing, put one of the palm scanners right here."

"Took you guys long enough," Otto said as Wing stuck the scanner on and the door swung open. Shelby rushed forwards to hug Laura.

"Are you alright?" she asked. Laura smiled at her.

"We're fine," she said. "Better than fine, actually."

"So," Shelby said, a mischievous smile on her face. "What have you two lovebirds been getting up to?"

Both Laura and Otto flushed bright shades of red. "N-nothing," Otto stammered. "Just talking."

"Ah," Shelby said, raising an eyebrow. "Anything of importance been

mentioned?"

"Do debates of quantum physics and the laws of perpetual motion count as 'important'?" Otto asked, smirking. Shelby looked severely put out.

"Otto, can you spell obtuse?"

"Oâ€"bâ€"tâ€"uâ€" oh." Otto glared at her. "Shut up, Shel."

"I agree," a new voice sad. "Shut up."

Wing spun around and was hallways through a kick when the sleeper pulse hit him in the chest.

* * *

><p>So? what did you guys think. the fluffiness wasn't the best, but i tried, so i hope you enjoyed it :)

**i recently read study Fanmail by Pigeonattackâ€" hilarious. you guys should read it. **

**you guys know the drill- please, please, please review! they make my day. **

5. K9

**Hello! **

so the action in this chapter is getting stepped up a slight bit, but the next one will be a lot better (quite a bit of Raven vs. Dekker)

this chapter almost killed me, because my mental planning of the story had a bit of a blank here so i had no clue what to write, but here it is: chapter five!

enjoy!

* * *

><p>The pulse hit Wing square on his ribs, sending him crashing back into the wall of the cell. He slid to the floor but quickly struggled back to his feet again. Otto was impressed by his friends' ability to stay awake after getting hit by a sleeper.<p>

"I knew leaving this place was a bad idea," Dekker said with a nasty smile, keeping her sleeper pistol trained at the four of them. She seemed slightly surprised by the fact Wing was still on his feet. "I would kill all of you now, except I need Malpense, and I have a bad feeling if I brought any sort of lethal weapon near you four he would find a way of using it on himself."

"That wasn't a compliment," Laura whispered to Otto, who was looking slightly pleased with himself. His face fell.

"So," Dekker continued. "I'm going to keep you all here until you're needed."

"You won't get away with it," Shelby said boldly, even though Dekker was pointing the pistol straight at her. "Nero will stop you."

"Oh, I wouldn't worry about Nero for too much longer," Dekker said with a crazed smile, before stepping back and letting the door slide shut.

"You know who that smile reminds me of?" Laura asked with a heavy sigh, staring at where Dekker had been.

"Overlord?"

"Cypher?"

"Sebastian Trent?"

Wing frowned at Shelby's mention of his father. It brought back painful memories.

"Mostly Overlord," Laura agreed. "But the other two are pretty close as well."

"And what did she mean, _don't worry about Nero too much longer?_" Shelby asked, worry all over her face. "I mean, no one could kill Nero, right?"

"They'd have to get past Raven first," Otto said confidently. "Which would be the dumbest mistake you could make in your life."

"But if she caught Nero when Raven wasn't thereâ€"

"Nero's still not helpless," Otto cut in. "I mean, he didn't become the leader of G.L.O.V.E by hiding behind Raven, did he?"

"No," Shelby admitted. "Okay, so Nero's a pretty hard guy to kill. But Dekker seemed pretty confident."

"Worrying about it isn't going to do us much good if we're stuck in here," Otto said. He and Shelby glared at each other for a minute.

"Are you guys done?" Laura asked, exasperated. "We need to figure out how to get out of here."

"I don't think there is a way," Shelby said, looking around quickly. "No lock on the door, the ventilation shaft is barely ten inches wide and Otto can't open the door without fainting."

"The cell does seem to be escape-proof," Wing agreed. "It's a shame that Otto is unable to interface with the machines."

"Yeah," Otto sighed. "A real pity." He sat down on the stone floor, looking dejected. "We were so close escape."

"Anyways," Shelby grinned, sitting down as well and pulling her knees up to her chest. "What were you two talking about in here?"

Laura brightened immediately. "We had a really good conversation

about the prospect of teleportation, and another debate aboutâ€”"

"Do you really think I care about that?" Shelby yawned. "I was wondering if either of you had admitted your love to each other. It's been three years, you know."

Again, both Otto and Laura turned red and looked at the floor, while Wing raised his eyebrows at Shelby. "I do believe the subject is embarrassing them," he told his girlfriend. "Perhaps you should stop."

"Of course it's embarrassing them," Shelby scoffed. "Why do you think I'm doing it?"

"You are harsh, Shelby," Otto told her, stretching out on the floor. "One of these days I'm going to find a way to get back at you."

"Dream on, Malpense," Shelby grinned. Otto didn't reply, just closed his eyes, laying flat on the stone floor with his eyes closed. At first glance it looked like he was just sleeping on his back. He winced slightly for no reason, but no one really noticed except for Laura. She nudged him with her foot. "Otto?"

She got no reply out of him. He remained motionless on the floor, his eyes closed and a slight grimace of pain on his face. "Otto!"

"Is he trying to interface?" Shelby asked, noticing Otto's position for the first time. Laura just nodded, shaking him violently. "Here, let me." Shelby stepped closer to Laura, bent down and slapped him sharply on the cheek.

"I wasn't doing anything!" he said irritably, sitting up and rubbing his cheek. "I was just probing around, seeing if Dekker had left anything useful lying around."

"Lying around?" Wing asked, confused by the way Otto was talking about the computers.

"You knowâ€” any sort of code that was easily accessible, that I could get to without blacking out," Otto explained. "And you didn't have to slap me, Shelby. I would have been back in a second."

"I'm sure you would have been," Shelby said, rolling her eyes. Otto grinned, and Shelby noticed the way Laura's cheeks became slightly colored.

"I did find something useful," Otto said, gesturing to Wing and Shelby. "Dekker forgot to take your Blackbox," he told Shelby, smiling. Surprise overcame her face and she patted frantically at her pockets, finally finding the device. She grinned triumphantly.

"So with HIVEmind on our side, how long until we get out of this place?" Shelby asked. Otto frowned.

"Umâ€¦ yeah. About that," he said nervously. "The same electronic impulse that is blocking my abilities is also blocking anything from transmitting to or from this cell."

Shelby groaned. "You've got to be kidding me."

"Could we make some modifications?" Laura asked. "You know, put it on a completely different frequency?"

"We could try," Otto frowned. "I don't really know what we would do after that, but we could try."

"I don't see why not," Laura shrugged. "We've got nothing else to do and a lot of time to kill."

"True," Otto admitted. "Alright, let's get to work."

"True," Otto admitted. "Alright, let's try it."

"Aw, the two lovers working together," Shelby said in a fake falsetto voice. Otto scowled at her and turned away, grabbing the Blackbox from her hand as he spun.

* * *

><p>"I am thinking their plan was failing," Franz whispered loudly into the darkness.<p>

"Franz, _shut up_. I'm trying to sleep," Nigel ordered, rolling over in his bed and burying his face in a pillow.

"Nigel, how can you be sleeping when our friends are being in trouble?" Franz cried, far too loudly. There were a couple of thumps on the wall and yells at him to shut up. Franz lowered his voice. "You are being the famous Nigel Darkdoom. You are needing to be saving them."

"Franz, why _dad_ is the famous one," Nigel said bitterly. "I'm just his good-for-nothing son."

"Don't be saying that," Franz said firmly. "You are being your own person who will be famous one day. Do not let your dad's shadow cover your little bald head, because you are being good enough to be better than your dad. You are having the best teachers in the world teaching you how to be amazing, so one day you will be amazing. You just are needing something to kick start your amazingness, and rescuing our friends is being the perfect way to do that. Now," he said, standing up and placing a hand large hand on each of Nigel's shoulders. "We will be saving our friends, for you are Nigel Darkdoom, and I am being Silent Death, and nothing can stop us together."

Nigel blink, surprised at Franz's sudden outburst. He sat up in bed and clapped, causing the lights in the dorm to light up. Blinking more, he took a second to think.

"You really thing that we could save our friends?" he asked Franz, who was standing in front of him, a serious expression on his face.

"Oh no," the larger boy said gravely. "Even with me being Silent Death and you being Nigel Darkdoom we couldn't save them."

"So what should we do?" Nigel asked, confused.

"We could go to the Silenter Silent Death," Franz said seriously. Nigel just looked more confused. Franz sighed loudly. "Nigel, you are needing to be smarter."

"Excuse me if I don't know your nicknames for everyone," Nigel said impatiently. "Just tell me."

"We could be going to Raven!" Franz said happily, clearly proud of his plan. "And then she would be saving Otto."

"That'sâ€" that's actually kind of smart, Franz," Nigel admitted. Franz was positively beaming.

"Now be getting your clothes on, we have a day to save," Franz said seriously. Nigel slowly stood up from his bed and pulled on his black jumpsuit.

"How are we going to get out?" Nigel asked once he was ready. Franz was standing by the door, a look of eager excitement on his face.

"Stop worrying," Franz said. He tapped the wall with his fist lightly and door slid open silently. Nigel's mouth fell open.

"How did youâ€" the doorâ€" what?" he spluttered, making sure to keep his voice down as they stepped outside. Franz tapped the door again, and it closed.

"How did you think I was getting out to satisfy my midnight munchies?" Franz asked with a self-satisfied smile. He led Nigel quietly down the stairs. Nigel was impressed by how silently someone as large as Franz could move.

They quietly passed under the massive blast doors that usually sealed off the accommodation block, which had been left open for some reason. They crept through the dark halls, Franz lighting the way with his Blackbox.

They had barely made it two halls before the hovering face of HIVEmind appeared, frowning slightly at them.

"Students Darkdoom and Argentblum, may I enquire as to why you are out of bed and roaming the hallways?" HIVEmind asked, tilting his head slightly.

"Shh!" Franz said urgently, looking around, scared. "We are on a rescue mission."

"And who are you rescuing?" HIVEmind asked. Nigel took it as a good sign the A.I didn't immediately raise the alarm.

"We're trying to save Otto, Laura, Shelby and Wing from Chief Dekker," Nigel said in a hurried whisper. HIVEmind looked at them as if he was considering his options.

"Very well," he said. "I shall notify Doctor Nero immediately."

* * *

><p>Maximillian Nero, leader of the Global Institute of Villainous

Enterprise, headmaster of the Higher Institute of Villainous Education, trainer and mentor of the infamous Diablous Darkdoom, seven-time savior of the world and the most wanted man on earth was not happy.

Currently, the person he was yelling at was Security Chief Dekker, who stood before him with an impassive face, arms crossed behind her back. Raven stood a few feet back, bright blue eyes taking in everyone and everything in front of her.

"One task!" Nero was hollering. "One simple task! Find which of the idiotic students decided it would be funny to _blast a hole in my office with a rocket launcher! _One that came from a supposedly secure weapons locker, which had been cut open with a laser weapon. You!" he wheeled to glare at professor Pike, who shrunk under his gaze. "Shouldn't you know better than to leave high-power nano lasers lying around?"

"T-the door to the lab was l-l-locked," Pike stammered. "And it wasn't just _lying aroundâ€"_"

"This is the Higher Institute of Villainous Education!" Nero screeched. "These kids are growing up to be the most cunning, powerful and lethal human beings on the planet, and you use the excuse 'the door was locked' to justify your incompetence?"

"He is _mad_," Security Officer Monroe, who was standing next to Raven with he hand hovering on his pistol. Half of the security force had shown up to see their boss get yelled at.

"This is nothing," the assassin snorted. "You should have seen him after Chavez's operation in Paris went wrongâ€| I thought he was going to pop an eye out."

"What do you have to have to say for yourself?" Nero said, turning back towards Dekker. "At your inability to track down one child?"

"No excuse, sir," Dekker said sharply. Nero glared at her, furious.

"Go to bed," he spat. "I don't have time for this tomfoolery." Dekker marched off, while Professor Pike quietly slipped away down the dark hall. Nero sighed and turned to the ranks of security forces that surrounded him.

"What are you looking at?" he snapped, and they all scattered except for Raven, who just stood there, looking slightly amused.

"Stop smirking," Nero ordered as he walked briskly passed her. "The incompetence level in this building is appalling."

"Come on, Max," Raven said as they started back towards his temporary office. "You have to admit it's a _bit_ funny."

"No, it's not," Nero said shortly. Before he could say anything else Blackbox gave a loud beep. Sighing, he reached into his pocket and opened it up. HIVEmind was there to greet him, his wireframe head the only thing on the black screen.

"Good morning, Doctor Nero," he said professionally.

"HIVEmind, one-thirty is not the morning," Nero sighed. "What do you want?"

"Students Darkdoom and Argentblum wish to see you," HIVEmind told him. "They say it has something to do with Security Chief Dekker."

"Dekker?" Nero asked, confused. "What would Dekker be doing?"

"They say she has captured students Malpense, Fanchu, Trinity and Brand."

"And here I was thinking it was going to be something different," Raven sighed, drawing her twin katana's and letting them hang by her side. She thumbed the controls and they lit up with a purple light.

"Have any of those students been anywhere they shouldn't?" Nero asked, glancing at Raven and nodding slightly. She tensed, ready to go wherever Nero told her.

"Students Fanchu and Trinity attended all classes that they should have today and were in their accommodation blocks as they should have been during lockdown."

"And where are they now?" Nero asked hurriedly.

"Student Fanchu is in his block as he should be," HIVEmind said. Nero felt relief wash through him. Then HIVEmind frowned slightly. "I am unable to locate students Malpense, Trinity or Brand."

"Fantastic," Nero sighed. He turned to Raven, rubbing his head. Tonight was just not his night. "Natalyaâ€¦"

"Do you want her dead, alive or somewhere in between?" Raven asked, a cold, assassin's smile forming on her face and she clutched her Katana's tighter.

"Bring her in alive," Nero told her after a moments thought. "I wont mind if she's missing some body parts, though."

"Understood," Raven nodded, before taking off through the halls.

"Sir, may I suggest that I send Security Officer Monroe to accompany you back to your quarters? I do not feel good about you being un-guarded with Dekker on the loose."

"Thank you, HIVEmind," Nero smiled. "Tell him to meet me here in five minutes."

"Shelby, can I ask you something?" Otto asked. He was squatted on the small stool, frowning at the Blackbox that was lying on the floor. The back had been pulled out and he was using Shelby's lock picks to modify it.

* * *

><p>Laura was asleep, slumped against the wall with her hair covering most of her face. She had gone to sleep an hour earlier, after Otto had assured her he would be fine working on the Blackbox alone. Finally, relenting, she had fallen asleep.<p>

Wing was either asleep or meditating, it was hard to tell. He sat in the far corner on the room, legs crossed, eyes closed, hands folded in his lap. His breathing was slow and measured and he hadn't moved for the better part of two hours.

"What, the incredible Malpense needs help on something?" Shelby mocked. "Why don't you read a boo about it. Too busy to spare five minutes?"

"Ha-ha," Otto said sardonically. "Thing is, I can't read a book about this sort of thing." He made a face. "Well I could, but Wing would never let me live it down."

"What is it?" Shelby asked, suddenly curious. Otto smirked, sensing he had won.

"Oh no, it's okay," he said. "I can just do it myself."

"Malpense, you have three seconds to tell me," Shelby announced seriously. "One. Two." Otto just smirked. "Three."

"Oh, very scary," Otto said. He bent down over the Blackbox, the picture of concentration as he carefully lifted a wire out of the jumble that made up that Blackbox and carefully cut half of it.

"Okay, I'm sorry," Shelby sighed, admitting defeat. "Can you tell me now?" Otto sat up, sighing and putting down his tools. He seemed nervous.

"Well, you seem to have experience with this sort of stuffâ€¦| soâ€¦| umâ€¦| if, hypothetically, I was going to tell someone I liked them, how and when should I do it?"

Shelby just stared at him for a second, then a wide grin spread across her face. "You're talking about Laura, aren't you?"

"I might be," Otto grumbled, leaning back down to the Blackbox and picking up another wire. He was trying to change the frequency of the Blackbox completely so they could transmit for help. It was precarious work and Otto was nervous he would mess up.

"Well, I would say just tell her," Shelby advised, sitting up, still smiling. She had been waiting for this for _ages. _Both Otto and Laura were too stubborn to actually tell anyone they liked each other, even though they clearly did. "You do realize how long I've waited for you to say this?"

"But what if I tell her and she doesn't like me back?" Otto asked, winding two wires together and connecting them at the ends. A small spark flew up into his face.

"Otto, trust me. She likes you." Shelby rolled her eyes. Even now, talking about his feelings, the guy was completely obtuse.

"How can you tell?" Otto wondered, squinting into the workings of the Blackbox and carefully re-arranging a couple of the parts. He was almost done, and then help would be on the way.

"How can you not tell?" Shelby shot back. "She looks at you all the time, you two flirt to the ends of the earth without even noticing it, and every time you're put in trouble she looks like she's going to faint."

"Really?" Otto asked, surprised. "I never noticed any of those things."

"Which just shows how oblivious you are," Shelby said. "But trust me, if you tell her how you feel, she will feel the same way."

"I was going to tell her today," Otto sighed. "I really was. I just seemed soâ€¦ like such a stupid thing to say at the time."

"Well get us out of here," Shelby said. "And then tell her. And end my agony." Otto nodded slowly. There was silence between them as he bent down and continued his work, but he was clearly thinking.

"Thanks," he said after a while.

"No problem," Shelby said with a grin. "Now fix that Blackbox and get us the hell out of here, Malpense."

"That's what I'm working on," Otto grinned. He went back to the inner workings of the P.D.A. It was precarious work but Otto handled it confidently, deftly moving and connecting different parts of the Blackbox. He used Shelby's miniature screwdriver to un-do a small compartment and was confronted by the hard-drive of the device. Smiling happily, he touched the edge of the screwdriver against it and watched it spark. Lifting up one of the wires, he connected it and felt the hard-drive hum with power. He let his mind drift to what Shelby had said, about Laura liking him back. He never actually thought she could like him, although apparently it had been obvious.

Time passed. He wasn't sure how much, he just kept working on the Blackbox until he felt someone tap his shoulder.

"Have you been working all this time?" Laura asked, rubbing sleep out of her eyes and standing behind him. He jump slightly, cutting a wire a little too deeply.

"Um-ohâ€¦ yeah," he stammered, his talk with Shelby coming back to him. "I'm done, in fact." He connected the last two wires with his fingers and smiled at Laura.

"What's it going to do?" Laura asked. Otto just smiled, snapping the case back on and standing up.

"Are you done yet, Malpense?" Shelby asked groggily, sitting up and rubbing her eyes. Wing was already awake, sitting perfectly still.

"Yeah, I'm done," Otto said. "No thanks to you."

"Hey," Shelby grinned. "I helped you out withâ€¦ stuff." Otto sent her a look that clearly said _shut up_, before looking down at the Blackbox in his hand.

"Should I turn it on?" Otto asked, flipping the Blackbox over in his hands. "I already have the code loaded into it."

"Do it," Laura nodded. "It's time to get out of here." Otto turned on the Blackbox, and the room was filled with a horrible, high-pitch squealing noise. Even Wing grimaced, covering his ears against the noise.

"Shut it off!" Shelby yelled, reaching forwards and knocking the Blackbox out of Otto's hands. It hit the floor and went silent.

"Sorry," Otto gasped, rubbing his ears. "Must have programmed the wrong frequency, or cut a wire too deep."

"I think I burst an eardrum," Laura grimaced, rubbing the side of her head repeatedly. Otto looked down, embarrassed.

"Sorry," he mumbled. He didn't know what had caused the squealing, but he was pretty sure the message had still sent. They would know in a couple of minutes.

"What did you send, anyways?" Shelby asked. "English, please, not computer garble."

"I sent a block of code to our project," Otto said, obviously pleased with himself. Shelby and Wing just look at him, confused, but Laura's mouth dropped open.

"You called K-9?" She asked. Otto just nodded, still smiling. "Malpense, I think I love you."

A second after the words left her mouth, she realized what she said and her face flushed bright red, the same colour as her hair. Shelby stifled a laugh as she looked from Laura to Otto, whose cheeks were also tinted with colour and didn't know where to look.

"Otto, did Laura just confess her love to you?" Wing asked, completely confused about the setup here. Shelby giggled again at his comment.

"No, Wing," Otto said hastily. "She-she meant as a friend. I think."

"Yeah," Laura covered quickly. "Like I love you. As a friend."

"Watch it, Brand," Shelby growled, moving closer to Wing.

"Why are you suddenly mad at Laura?" Wing asked his girlfriend.

"Because she justâ€¦"never mind," Shelby said rolling her eyes. Otto, who was sitting on the stool watching with amusement, heard a faint buzz in the air.

"Hey!" he said. "K-9's here!"

"What if Dekker's in the room?" Laura asked, suddenly worried.

"Based on the lack of bullets, I'm guessing she's not," Otto smiled. He listened carefully, and outside the cell they could hear the same faint buzzing.

"That'd be the inner doorâ€|" he muttered as a loud clang sounded.

"Um, Otto?" Shelby asked. "What exactly is K-9?"

"I believe it's a nickname," Wing supplied. "Most likely for Otto and Laura's invention."

"Wing, you are completelyâ€|" Shelby was cut off as there was a deafening _bang_. She looked up and saw a large dent in the steel door to their cell. Her eyes went wide. "Malpense, what is it?"

"You'll see," Otto said as the door dented again. "One more hitâ€|"

Sure enough, with one more resounding bang, the door gave away. , falling to the ground and leaving their escape route open. Shelby was in shock, staring at the damaged door, which had to be six inches thick. Wing was as calm as ever.

"Guys," Otto said proudly. "We," he gestured to him and Laura. "We presentâ€| K-9."

* * *

><p>So there it is. Who knew Franz had it in him for inspiring speeches?

**not as much OttotoxLaura fluffiness, but he does confess his love, which i had to wait six freaking books to happen in the actual series. **

If you have any questions or criticism, or simply feel like making my day, the blue button below this text is the way to do it!

6. Dogs with lasers

**Hello. I was clean out of ideas for this chapter, so I apologize for the OOC ness, the shortness, and how awful this chapter is, because i had nothing to write. **

This chapter is dedicated to my dog, who got attacked on the weekend and was almost killed :(he's okay now, and he has a chapter up for him.

Yay for the olympics!

enjoy!

* * *

><p>There was a stunned silence.<p>

Then:

"Awwwww," Shelby said, clapping her hands together and bouncing on the balls of her feet. "It's a dog!"

"Canine," Wing said, looking down at the creation. "K-9, Canine, very clever, Otto."

"Hey!" Laura said, offended. "I came up with the name."

"Does it talk?" Shelby asked, leaning down to look at K-9. Itâ€"heâ€" was about a foot and a half tall, made of shiny black metal, with tank treads that he rode on. His face consisted of a long nose, ending in a glowing white light. Two sharp ears stuck up from the top of his head, rotating constantly. His eyes were blue and large. It did resemble a dog, with it's pointed nose and ears, although the tank treads looked different.

"Affirmative," K-9 said, in answer to Shelby's question. She let out an excited squeal.

"It's so cute!" she said. "I always dreamed of getting rescued by a knight in shining armor, but I guess this will have to do."

"What about a ninja in invisible clothes?" Wing asked. Shelby gave him a sly look.

"Do you mean the type that make you invisible, or actualâ€"?"

"How are you, K-9?" Otto asked, cutting off Shelby. The dog turned to look at him.

"I am good, Master," he said. "I presume I have succeeded in rescuing you?"

"Yes you did," Otto smiled. "Good job, K-9. Good boy."

"Affirmative."

"What does he do, though?" Shelby asked. "I mean, he looks kinda harmless." In answer, K-9 swiveled around to face the wall. A small orb popped out of the top of his head, and a high-powered laser beam shot out, slicing straight through the concrete wall and into the room next to them.

"Impressive," Wing nodded, unfazed. "Anything else?"

"Oh, he does everything," Laura grinned. "K-9, disappear." There was a slight ripple, and then the dog disappeared into thin air, all signs of him gone. "Re-appear." K-9 materialized again.

"Now," Otto grinned. "As much as I would love to stay and show of our brilliance to you guys, I say we get out of here pronto."

"I agree," Wing said. "K-9, lead the way." The little dog, who

apparently took orders from Wing, turned and rolled silently out of the room, ears turning every which way.

"I can detect no hostiles in the area," K-9 informed them. "The route out of here is clear, master, thanks to the laser you installed."

"One second," Laura said, at the same time Otto said,

"Hold on. I want to take a look at her computer," he said. He and Laura shared a grin, before sitting down at the two chairs that occupied the massive array of keyboards, control panels and screen monitors.

"I'll work on getting rid of the encryption," Laura said, resting her hands on one of the keyboards.

"I'll see if I can shut down the electromagnetic impulse," Otto replied. "Then we can get into all of her files without a problem."

"Yeah, yeah," Laura huffed. "No need to rub it in."

"I suggest we guard the door," Wing said to Shelby.

"I will take care of that," K-9 said, rolling towards the door and stopping there, his ears swiveling and his little black tail twitching. Wing watched him in amazement, still failing to believe Otto and Laura had built him. He made a note to show it to Professor Pike.

"Electromagnetic impulse off," Otto announced triumphantly. "Let's see what Dekker's getting up to." Laura sat back as Otto closed his eyes, sinking into Dekker's computer. Otto looked like he was in a trance, with his eyes closed and his arms folded in front of him.

Suddenly, his eyes shot open and he stood up quickly. "We have to get out of here."

"What is the problem?" Wing asked calmly. He was standing next to K-9, arms folded behind his back.

"It's Dekker," Otto said hurriedly. "She has this whole planâ€¦ the silver caseâ€¦ Neroâ€¦ blocking HIVEmindâ€¦ how could I have been so stupid?"

"Otto," Laura put a hand on his shoulder. "Calm down. Explain."

"Okay," Otto said, taking a deep breath. "Dekker has these really, really secure emails. It took me a couple of minutes to get throughâ€¦"

"What?" Shelby mocked, grinning. "Mr. Supercomputer meets his match?"

"Shut up," Otto snapped. "It was like an electronic net surrounding the information."

"Interesting," Laura said, looking intrigued. "Maybe we could re-create one of those, and modify itâ€"

"So that the code can't be overwritten, which is how I got throughâ€"

"Then we could change the programmingâ€"

"Don't you just hate it when they do that?" Shelby asked Wing, who was still standing there. He nodded.

"Especially in times like this," he said. "Otto. Please continue."

"Right. Sorry," Otto said. "So I got through, and read the emails. Dekker's planning on killing Nero, shutting down HIVEmind and taking over H.I.V.E."

"So?" Shelby asked. "I mean, not that that's not a big deal, but it's been done before."

"I know," Otto said irritably. "But the first time I saw her with Nigel and Franz, she was carrying this big, heavy, suspicious looking silver case. I found out what it's for: it contains HIVEmind."

"So basically, Dekker's going to shoot Nero, steal HIVEmind and then take over the school?" Shelby asked, frowning slightly. Otto nodded.

"And we have to stop her," he answered. There was a brief, worried silence, which K-9 broke.

"Master, I am detecting intruders in the hallway," he told Otto.

"Are they still intruders if we're the ones intruding in the first place?" Otto asked thoughtfully, before turning towards the door. "Right. K-9, can you get us out?"

"Set lasers to stun," Laura added.

"A bit over stun," Shelby cut in. "Make it hurt."

"Affirmative," K-9 said, the small laser turret on his head pivoting and humming softly. Wing tensed beside the robotic dog, ready to lash out at whoever came through the door.

A shadow of a figure appeared and K-9 reacted immediately, an laser flying forwards towards the figure, who dove out of the way. Wing charged forwards as K-9 fired again, only hitting the wall. The shadow moved again, striking out at Wing and sweeping his feet off the floor.

"K-9, hold your fire!" Otto yelled.

"Affirmative."

Laura looked at him like he was insane, but the little dog complied. The lasers stopped shooting, although the turret kept turning.

"Thank you very much, Mr. Malpense," Raven said, stepping from behind the shelter of the desk and dusting herself off. "I'm not a bit surprised to see you here, although I was hoping Chief Dekker would be here as well. Is she?"

"No," Otto replied, looking worried. "Where's Nero?"

Raven swore in Russian and unsheathed her blades. "Come on, you four. Does the dog move quickly?"

"I have a speed capacity of ninety-seven miles an hour," K-9 said in response. Raven nodded, looking impressed.

"Come on," she said. "We have to save Nero."

"Where's Dekker going?" Wing asked calmly as they sprinted out into the hallway. Students parted before them. the sight of Raven with her glowing twin Katana's was enough to part them, but to add to the strangeness there was a small black dog on tank treads rolling in front of them, a laser turret on his head and a tail that sparked with electricity.

"HIVEmind!" Raven yelled into her Blackbox as she skidded around a corner. Nothing happen. "HIVEmind. HIVEmind!"

"He's offline," Otto panted. He was struggling to keep up with the rest of the group, minus Laura maybe. "Which means Dekker has already contained him."

"What does she want with him?" Shelby asked as Raven led them through another door. She didn't even pause to open it; her katana's flashed and there was a gaping hole in the steel door.

"Let me think," Otto snapped. "The worlds first successful Artificial Intelligence. You could either sell it or use it to take over the world."

"Or both," Laura added. Otto was distracted and would've run straight into Raven had Wing not stopped him. The assassin had stopped at the door to Nero's quarters and was listening. Her face paled.

"There's no one in there," She whispered in horror. "She must have already killed them." Otto hung his head and even K-9's tail drooped a bit when they heard that.

"Where would Dekker be now?" Otto said after a moments silence. Raven had a cold look in her eyes.

"If she had a shred of intelligence in her, she would be in the hangar bay, getting as far away from here as possible," she growled. "And we're going to hunt her down."

"Maybe she hasn't killed Nero yet," Otto said hopefully. "Maybe she took him with her."

"Maybe," Raven sighed. "But it doesn't matter." She took a deep breath, her face carved out of stone. "I'm going to kill her. Let's go."

It took them three minutes to get to the Hangar Bay, where there was a sight that shocked even Raven: a shroud was hovering in mid-air, blasting at the heavy doors that blocked it from getting outside, while the H.I.V.E guards on the ground hit it with everything they had.

A rocket streaked into the air and slammed into the shroud, rocking it to the side. Otto stood in stunned silence, watching the scene before him.

"K-9," he said quietly. "Get onboard that ship. Full cloak. Wait for orders."

"Affirmative," K-9 said. Immediately, he flickered out of existence, but not before Otto saw the tiny thrusters on his stomach lift him into the air.

"Status report!" Raven was barking at the guards. One of themâ€œ" Monroeâ€œ" turned towards her.

"Chief Dekker's on the Shroud with Nero and HIVEmind," he said. Otto felt a huge weight lift off his chest. Nero was still alive. There was still hope.

"We need to get to that shroud," Raven snapped. "Prep another one."

"Give me five minutes," Monroe nodded.

"You have three," Raven growled.

Under the assassin's glare, Monroe was done in two.

* * *

><p>"I really do not see what you gain from this," Nero informed Dekker calmly. He was strapped to a chair, arms bound, legs tied together, helpless to do anything as they slowly but surely blasted their way to freedom.<p>

"Shut up," Dekker snapped as another missile rocked the craft. "One more sound, and I put a bullet through your head."

"Oh, I doubt it," Nero sneered. "If you wanted to kill me, you would have already. You need me for something. Getting HIVEmind to actually listening to you?"

"Shut up," Dekker commanded again.

"You should know you're making a huge mistake here," Nero informed her, his voice turning to ice. "I've made worse enemies than you."

"Like who?" Dekker challenged. Nero was getting to her. He could tell.

"Otto Malpense is a bigger threat than you ever will be," Nero snapped. "I'm surprised he hasn't brought the shroud down yet."

"It's because you're on it," Dekker said with a lethal smile. "You have enemies, Max."

"My friends call me Max," Nero told her coldly. "You call me Nero."

"You have lots of enemies, Nero," Dekker continued. "People that would very much like to kill you. You could be worth more than HIVEmind."

"Why are you doing this, Dekker?" Nero asked after a minute's silence. "It's not as if you're in need of money."

"We all have our reasons, Nero," Dekker snapped. "Now shut up."

Nero stayed silent as they finally succeeded in blasting their way out of the cavern. He flinched as rocks tumbled down from the roof, smacking into the wind of the shroud and sending them spinning. Dekker grunted and threw the controls to counter the movement, pushing the throttle to maximum. They shot outside into the blue sky, one final rocket bouncing off of the shroud's engine before they were clear. Nero let out a deep breath. He was by himself.

"Not so confident now, are we?" Dekker smirked. She didn't know two things: one, in the hangar below, a second shroud was just lifting off, and two, a small robotic dog had just landed on the roof of the shroud. K-9 cut his engines, landed softly and waited for orders.

"You should know how big of a mistake you're made," Nero told her quietly. "Raven will hunt you to the ends of the earth. There's no place you can hide."

"Ah yes," Dekker said. "Your pet assassin. She won't be around for much longer, I'm afraid."

"I've lost track of how many times I've heard people say that," Nero smiled. He closed his eyes. "Just don't expect any mercy, Chief Dekker."

* * *

><p>Raven pulled hard on the joystick of the shroud and pushed the throttle to full. They shot out through the hole Dekker had created, just in time to see the other shroud flicker and disappear.<p>

"Great," the assassin sighed. "They're gone."

"Not necessarily," Laura grinned.

"I can't detect it," Otto guessed at what she was thinking. "Dekker's got the electromagnetic pulse working again."

"I wasn't thinking about that," Laura said excitedly. She ran over to the shroud's control panel. "The last time we saw it, it was ascending, right?"

"Brand, you are a genius!" Otto yelled, coming up to stand next to her. The others remained baffled as Otto began punching buttons.

"I fail to grasp how the fact Chief Dekker is ascending in her shroud will help us locate them," Wing said with a frown. "Would you please explain the concept?"

"Think of it this way," Otto said. "The Shroud's impossible to detect. There's no thermal signature, no radar signature, no noise, nothing."

"It's impossible," Raven snapped. "We get it. So what are you two doing?"

"We're at twenty thousand feet," Otto said. "Even if you're not that high, the Shroud has to give off somethingâ€" carbon dioxide, oxygen, nitrogen. The shroud automatically filters these so it leaves no trail that you can follow."

"Again," Shelby said. "So what? You're just basically lecturing us on how it's impossible to find it."

"Exactly!" Otto yelled, to the dismay of the others. Only Laura could understand what he was saying. "The Shroud is literally a whole in thin air. So," he spun the screen around, so they could see a map of the sea surrounding them, with different colored arrows circulating it. "We scan the air for a hole."

"A hole?" Wing inquired. Laura took up the explanation.

"The shroud recycles the air inside of it, so it leaves no signature," she said. "All we did was scan for different gasses in the air." she pointed at a part on the screen, where a large blob of black was quickly moving away from them. "The Shroud shows up like a black hole."

Raven was the first one to get it. "It gives out no gasses, so the sensors pick it up as an area without any gasses," she confirmed. Otto nodded.

"In basic terms, yeah," he answered. "So now we can see where Dekker's going."

"Is there any way to fix this process?" Wing asked. "That way the shrouds would be truly invisible."

Shelby groaned. "Don't ask, Wing. Are you looking for a month-long explanation?"

"There will always be some sort of way to find it," Otto told Wing. "But for this, all you would have to do is install vents that filter out a measured amount of natural gasses, completely cloaking the shroud."

"Interesting," Raven said. "But right now, we have to save Max." She pushed the controls down, coaxing every bit of power out of the shroud.

"Is there anything we can do?" Otto asked. Raven shook her head, so the four of them sat down in the storage compartment, leaving the assassin to tracking down Nero and Dekker.

"Let's place bets," Shelby suggested. "How badly will Raven torture Dekker?"

"Very funny, Shelby," Otto snapped, sliding down onto the floor. Just to test it out, he reached tentatively with his mind, searching for Dekker's shroud, but found nothing except a stabbing pain in his right temple. Opening his eyes, he rubbed it softly.

"Otto, are you attempting to access Chief Dekker's shroud using your abilities?" Wing asked him quietly. Otto just nodded, his head still sore.

"Not a good idea," Laura told him. "We're following them. It'll be fine."

"Right," Otto nodded, but he wasn't convinced. Nero was in deep trouble, and it was up to them to save him.

Minutes passed in silence, besides the almost silent hum of the shrouds engines as they raced towards Dekker's shroud. Otto wondered where she was going. Would she land somewhere, or merely throw Nero out of the shroud as soon as he got annoying?

Suddenly, he was aware of another presence. He couldn't describe it. He just felt something humming through his mind. Immediately, he perked up.

"There's another plane!" he said. "Wait, no. Not a plane." He closed his eyes again and reached out with his mind. "It's a boat." He told the others. "There's a boat sitting in the water."

"We should tell Raven," Laura said, standing up. Otto stood up as well and followed her. Wing was about to go, but Shelby put an arm on his shoulder.

"Just wait," she grinned. "No need for all of us to go up there." Wing sat back down as Otto climbed up the ladder. Laura was already there, talking to Raven.

"It's cloaked," The assassin frowned. "And it's not showing up on the radar." She pointed to the map of the ocean with the air currents circulating on it.

"They don't need air inside of it," Otto explained quickly. "You want to see it?" He closed his eyes and swayed on his feet. Raven reached up to catch him quickly and placed him down on the floor, where he collapsed onto his side.

"Give him a minute," Laura smirked. Raven, however, was more concerned by the fact the mysterious ship had just de-cloaked in the middle of the ocean and was now firing every weapon it had straight up into the sky.

"Hmmm," she said. "That might help find it."

* * *

><p>So? Did you like it? I know i promised Raven vs. Dekker fighting, but sadly there was none. Sorry! Hopefully there will be next chapter.

****Thank you to everyone who reviews, even though I've only had three reviews between my last two chapters. I'm counting on you guys to give me more. Please? For my dog?****

****Reviews are bullet-proof, laser-shooting, flying invisible dogs named K-9!****

****Review please!****

7. An idiot's sacrifice

****Okay, okay, you guys are allowed to yell at me. I haven't updated in forever, but i kind of have a good reason. We were on vacation, and i didn't have my laptop, so i couldn't type and... yeah, i'll shut up now.****

****Huge, huge thank you to everyone who helped me reach 20 reviews. i feel really bad, because every single one of you asked me to update faster, which i didn't. sorry!****

****a shout-out on this chapter for Shnizel, who has reviews every single chapter in my story and been one of the main reasons i try to update quickly. Shnizel, this chapter's for you.****

****anyway, you guys probably want to read my chapter not hear me ramble on, so here it is.****

*** * ***

><p>Captain Jack Harkness of the S.S Striker stared in shock as his ship decided to uncloak and simultaneously fire every weapon on board, and he was helpless to stop it. Ignoring the distressed yells of his crew, he ran from control panel to control panel, flipping switches, toggling buttons and doing everything he could to re-cloak the ship and stop the weapons.

It didn't work. The weapons continued firing straight up, a bright beacon that could probably be seen from H.I.V.E.

"Sir!" one of the guards said, running in. "Chief Dekker has just landed with the computer and Doctor Nero, sir."

"Brilliant," Harkness snapped at him. "Maybe if you could work on getting the damn ship to stop firing, then we could focus on Nero."

"I've tried, sir," a technician said. "I don't know what happened. One moment everything was going fine, then the systems were justâ€¦ gone. The security was swept aside like it didn't exist."

"We can override the systems," Harkness said hurriedly. "Send us into a full lockdown. That would work. Maybe."

"But then we'd be sitting in the water," the technician countered. "With no weapons."

"Well, we don't have any weapons right now," Harkness snapped. "Do it." The technician ran over to the control panel and started pushing

buttons.

"I just need your override password," he said nervously. Harkness hurried over and typed it in. Nothing happened.

"Damn!" he yelled. "Okay, new orders. I want everyone out on the deck, armed with whatever guns we have left. Anything moves in that sky, shoot it." He knew it was futile, though. His carefully laid plan was unraveling before him.

Then a second shroud de-cloaked in mid-air and started firing at his boat.

* * *

><p>"You're enjoying this, aren't you?" Otto asked Raven through gritted teeth. The assassin sat at the controls of the shroud, in a steep dive towards the boat, firing every weapon on the attack shroud.<p>

"Maybe a little," she admitted as a missile went clean through the hull before detonating. She was just waiting for Dekker to try to escape in her shroud, but that didn't happen. Instead, she saw Doctor Nero get ushered out of the shroud and into the depths of the ship, while the rest of the crew took up defenses on the deck and began firing at their shroud.

"They do realize that's doing nothing, right?" Shelby asked in dismay as bullets pinged off the armor plating of the shroud.

"It would appear not," Wing said calmly, watching the ship grow closer and closer. "Although they may present a problem if we attempt to land and get out."

"I can help with that," Otto grinned he closed his eyes and sent a single block of code to K-9, who was still waiting on the shrouds roof. Immediately, the little dog came to life, his laser turret popping out of his head. His ears started to rotate and his tail began to twitch as he fired the first laser shot into the deck.

Otto watched with a satisfied smirk as the neat rows of guards became a scramble of disorganized bodies. Some kept firing at the shroud, but the majority of them turned towards the small black dog that was slowly moving along the deck, his body and laser turret pivoting as he picked off the guards.

"I want one," Raven said as she watched K-9 wreck havoc. She was able to bring the Shroud down silently behind the crows nest. Grabbing her twin blades, she flicked them on and grinned. "You guys, wait here."

Otto watched in shock as Raven kicked the door to the shroud clean off. That door, he knew, was bullet proof and built to withstand a direct hit from an enemy missile.

Raven launched herself at the crowd of guards who had surrounded the shroud. A single shot was fired at her before she attacked the guards, katana's singing through the air, merely a blur as she danced, wove and sliced her way through the guards.

It took two minutes before the coast was clear. Otto looked outside, impressed by Raven's work. "Okay. Brand, Trinity, with me. We're going save Nero. Malpense, Fanchu, you have to go see what mayhem you can cause."

"I can do that," Otto sad, grinning at Wing, who smiled back. "I can definitely do that."

"Good," Raven said. Otto's gaze drifted off to where K-9 was still in the middle of the deck, laser still firing consistently at the guards. They swarmed around him, bullets pinging uselessly off his bodies as one by one the guards were flung off their feet by the little dog's lasers.

"Otto, can I talk to you for a second?" Laura asked, appearing next to him. Otto jumped a little but nodded, ignoring the suggestive grin Shelby was shooting them as Laura led him around the back of the shroud and took a deep breath.

"Last chance, Malpense," she told him with a slight smile, although she looked nervous. "What did you want to tell me?"

"Ohâ€" umâ€"|" Otto hesitated. It was the perfect chance. Right here, right now.

"Look," Laura said. "We're running into a shroud surrounded by armed guards. I might be shot right here, right now. If there's something you want to say, just say it. Please." She hadn't noticed, but she was now holding both his hands in hers. He looked down at their hands, before looking up and staring her right in the eyes.

"Okay," he said. Before he could stop himself, he continued: "I like you. I always have, since the first day I saw you. You're funny, and brilliant, and pretty, andâ€" just, everything that I would want you to be, and more, and you're amazing at everything you do, and you're always happy, and I've been hiding it for three years because I was scared that you didn't feel the same way, and I've never felt this way before, and you're probably going to laugh at me, but I have to say it, because you're amazing, and beautiful, and, and," Otto took a deep breath. "And I love you. I always have."

Laura looked at him, at first like she couldn't believe what she was hearing, and Otto was scared he had blown it. Then she broke into a massive smile and out a hand on his cheek.

"Ottoâ€"|" she began, but Raven came around the side of the shroud, her eyes icy.

"Come on," she said, her blades gleaming. "We're saving Nero. Malpense, blow the ship sky high."

"Aye," Laura grinned. "I second that."

"Consider it done," Otto smirked, getting back his old confidence. "And I'll do it with pleasure."

"Good," Raven smiled. "We're teaching you right." She turned around, and before Otto could say anything, Laura kissed him on the cheek, smiled, and turned away. He stood there, frozen for several seconds.

"Are you alright, Otto?" Wing asked, appearing next to him. Otto just grinned at him.

"Come on, Wing," he said, perhaps too happy. "We have a ship to blow up."

"Are you sure nothing is wrong?" Wing asked uncertainly, following Otto as he practically skipped towards the crows nest of the ship, a huge grin still plastered on his face.

"I'm fine, Wing," he sang. "More than fine. I'm phenomenal. Stupendous. I amâ€¦ exultant."

* * *

><p>Captain Jack Harkness stared in dismay at the little dog that was making his highly trained guards look like preschoolers. He scanned the ship and was surprised to see three figures moving stealthily across the deck. Pulling out a pair of binoculars, he quickly found them and focused on the leaders face.<p>

The glasses fell out of his hands and he took a step backwards, before grabbing the gun that was resting against the wall next to him. It was Raven racing across the deck. He pulled his radio to his lips.

"All units, Raven is inbound towards the shroud. Move to intercept. I repeat, move to intercept."

"We have a bit of a problem down here, Sir," one of the guards snapped. Harkness sighed.

"Kill the shooty-doggy thingy," he sighed angrily, staring down at the little black dog that had taken out half of his security force.

One of the guards got the sense to fire a rocket launcher at it. The missile streaked forwards, but before it could get anywhere near K-9 his laser turret pivoted and hit the missile, detonating it and blowing a large hole in the hull of the ship.

Below, Raven shielded her face from the shrapnel that went flying across the deck as the missile detonating. Behind her, Laura stumbled but Shelby caught her before she could fall. They raced towards the shroud, which was only guarded by two guards at the door.

Raven was on them before they could react, blades swinging through the air as both the guards toppled down. She grabbed one of their guns, before throwing the other to Shelby.

"What am I supposed to do?" Laura whispered as they crept towards the shrouds door.

"Technical stuff," Shelby whispered back as Raven cut through the door and stepped inside the storage bay. She could hear talking.

"Wait here," she whispered, climbing the ladder into the cockpit of the shroud. There was single gunshot, followed by a couple of clangs

and Dekker's body came tumbling down the hatch.

"Looks like we're not needed," Shelby said, poking an unconscious and bleeding chief Dekker with the butt of her gun. Raven had swiftly dealt with her, cutting her gun in half with one blade and knocking her out with the second, not before a long gash had been dealt to the Security Chiefs arm.

"I'm suddenly very glad I'm not the chief," Laura grimaced. Raven appeared, whipping blood from her Katana's. It had splattered onto her cheek.

"Right," she said. "Brand, lock down this Shroud. Make sure no one can get it off the ground. We need to go find Nero."

Suddenly, a loud beep filled the ship, seemingly coming from everyone. Raven dropped into a combat position, her blades crackling to life.

"Did I get this right?" came Otto's voice from the P.A system. "Can you guys hear me?"

"We can hear you," Shelby grinned. Laura found her tongue had suddenly swelled in her mouth as she heard Otto's voice. She remembered his speech: _And | I love you. I always have_.

"Great," Otto replied. "Look, we found Nero, but there are three guards outside of his cell." There was a thump. "Just kidding. Make that no guards."

"Get him up onto the deck," Raven said urgently. "The security forces are starting to overwhelm your pet. He seems to be fading."

"Right," Otto said. "If you give me three minutes, I can get to the boiler room and set a timer. I'd appreciate it if you guys had a Shroud ready for take-off once we get back."

"Copy that," Raven said, pushing open the door and hopping back onto the Shroud. Sure enough, K-9 was being swarmed by guards.

"Will he be alright?" Shelby asked as they raced towards their own Shroud. Laura nodded.

"He's still got a few tricks u his sleeve | paw | tread," she answered as they bolted along the deck of the ship towards their Shroud. Someone noticed them and pointed.

"That's not good," Raven said, ducking her head and sprinting even faster. Laura struggled to keep up as they dodged guards and debris that K-9 had created. A bullet buzzed by her cheek, causing her to speed up. Raven reached the Shroud first, punching in her access code and diving through the door. Shelby was next, grabbing Laura's hand and yanking her inside as a spray of bullets hit the spot she had been just moments ago.

The door clunked shut solidly. Raven was already at the controls, getting the shroud ready for take off.

"Laura," Shelby asked calmly. "I know he's a super-genius and all, but how exactly does your boyfriend plan on getting to the Shroud

when it's surrounded by guards?"

The ship jerked sideways, toppling guards and causing the Shroud to skid twenty feet closer to the edge of the ship. The door slid open and Otto appeared, grinning. Wing materialized next to him, followed by Raven. They were all dressed in white suites.

"Where did you get those?" Shelby demanded as the three climbed into the Shroud before the guards could stand up again. Raven heard them talking and immediately pushed the joystick, lifting the shroud off the ground.

"Kind of a long story," Otto said. "We had just rescued Nero and were heading to the boiler room, like I said. Suddenly, this kid," he gestured to Wing, "Throws himself to the side and punches thin air. I think he's gone insane, but then Nero joins in, kicking at nothing."

"And then Otto walks forwards and trips over the three camouflaged guards we had just knocked out," Wing smiled.

"I didn't trip over him!" Otto exclaimed indignantly. "I was helping you locate them so we could take their suites."

"Ah," Wing said, nodding wisely. "I am sure."

"So we took the suits," Otto said, continuing the story. "And snuck out onto the deck, only to find you guys surrounded by guards."

"So you hijacked the boat's systems," Shelby guessed. "And almost tipped us."

"Pretty much," Otto nodded, looking pleased with himself. "It got us on board."

"Indeed," Nero said, talking for the first time. "It seems you have saved me again, Mister Malpense." They sat in silence for several minutes until Raven dropped into the cargo bay.

"We have good news and bad news," she told them grimly. Otto groaned and rolled over.

"I really hate it when she says that," he muttered. Under his breath: "First, she tells us the bad newsâ€|"

"We forgot the case containing HIVEmind on the other Shroud," Raven grimaced.

"Next, she tells us more bad news that she turns into good news," Otto murmured to himself.

"The good news is that Shroud is flying right towards us," Raven finished. Laura, who had heard Otto whispering, grinned at him, making his heart leap.

"Oh, that's brilliant," Shelby grinned. "Where is it now?"

"About a minute out," Raven replied mildly. "Max, if you would man the weaponsâ€|"

"With pleasure," Nero smiled, standing up and climbing into the cockpit of the shroud, leaving the four Alphas in the cargo bay.

"Something tells me this isn't going to go as planned," Shelby said. A missile detonated outside the Shroud, rocking the aircraft and sending the students flying into the wall.

"You had to say something," Otto groaned, picking himself up and strapping himself into one of the chairs. the others did the same.

"I thought you were suppose to lock down that Shroud?" Shelby asked once she was secure in place. Laura flushed a deep shade of red.

"We didn't have time," she defended. "You two just ran out of there."

"Oh sure," Shelby muttered. "Blame it all on us." Another explosion rocked the Shroud. The straps of his seat dug into Otto's shoulders, but it was better than getting thrown against a wall.

"I'm going up," Shelby suddenly announced, unbuckling her harness and heading towards the ladder that led to the cockpit. Wing immediately sprang up.

"Me too," he said, striding towards the ladder.

"I'm not getting left behind," Laura said, unbuckling her harness. Otto let out a long sigh, before standing up and stumbling towards the ladder. He climbed it last, reaching the cockpit and standing up. He glanced out the window and was surprised at what he saw.

Dekker's Shroud circled their own, both uncloaked and fully visible. As he watched, a missile unlatched from the wing of the enemy Shroud and streaked towards their own. Otto closed his eyes, reached out with his mind and detonated the missile before it could hit their Shroud.

"Yes!" Shelby yelled as she watched it explode. "Score one for the good guys."

"Miss trinity, I would kindly ask you to shut up," Nero snapped. He was at the controls of the weapon system of the Shroud. Shelby clamped her mouth shut as Nero swiveled a joystick, sending a spray of high-velocity rounds into Dekker's Shroud. This was followed by one of their own missiles that hit the wing.

Suddenly, Dekker's Shroud fully cloaked and disappeared completely from their sight. "Cloak!" Otto yelled at Raven. "Cloak the damn Shroud!"

"Two missiles incoming," Nero said gravely. "Brace for impact." Otto grabbed the back of Raven's chair as the whole Shroud was thrown to the side. Laura almost fell but Otto caught her, just as the second missile hit. He was thrown to the ground and Laura fell on top of him. Their faces were inches apart.

"Ohâ€¦ umâ€¦" Laura said, scrambling off of him and standing up. She helped him up.

"Sorry," Otto mumbled, feeling his face burn. He turned towards Nero when a sudden realization hit him.

"Doctor Nero, sir," he said. "You cant bring that Shroud down, because you need HIVEmind, right?"

"Correct," Nero said. Raven threw them into a dive as a round of bullets streaked by. They leveled out after a second.

"And Dekker can't shoot us down, because she needs you," Otto said, his mind racing as thoughts bounced around.

"Correct," Nero repeated after a seconds' hesitation.

"So eventuallyâ€" " Otto said, but he was cut of by a loud _thunk_. "And exchange will have to happen."

"What was that sound?" Raven asked, standing up and reaching for her swords.

"Go check," Nero commanded. "Just as Malpense predicted, Chief Dekker seems to have stopped firing."

Raven dropped down into the cargo bay. A second later, there was a gunshot and a grunt of pain. Nero stood up, reaching for the gun on the control panel.

"Everyone freeze," came Chief Dekker's calm voice. "Unless you want your little Raven to die, come down one by one, one hand on the ladder, the other hand in the air. You will line up against the wall with your hands by your sides. You will not move."

The five occupants of the cockpit stared at each other, debating their next move. A gunshot made them all jump.

"No!" Dekker yelled. Otto went first, climbing down the ladder with his back turned to Dekker. He expected to feel a bullet in his back at any time, but he made it down safely, going to stand by the wall. Dekker grinned viciously at him.

"Back for more, I seen, Mister Malpense," she sneered. The door to the Shroud was opened, and through it Otto could see a tube, leading to Dekker's Shroud. Some sort of docking system.

One by one, Nero, Shelby, Wing and Laura climbed down the ladder, all looking about as mad as Otto felt. They lined up against the wall.

"Good," Dekker smiled. Raven was slumped against the wall, a bullet hole in her shoulder. "Very good. I originally just needed Nero, but you two," she pointed at Raven and Otto, "Will pay nicely as well."

She kept one gun pointed at Raven and the other gun pointed at Wing, who was coiled tighter than a spring. Otto looked at Laura and saw the terror in her eyes. New anger lit inside of him.

"If anyone moves, I kill them," Dekker said. There was a mad glint in here eyes. "I'm going to be rich. The A.I I could sell for three

billion, at least. Doctor Nero" her eyes glinted. "You have enemies. You could be auction off for at least another ten billion dollars. Your pet assassin, three-quarters of a billion, if she cooperates."

"Which I won't," Raven spat angrily.

"A quarter of a billion, then," Dekker shrugged. "No matter. Mister Malpense, you could go for half a billion. I will be rich. I will be"

She was cut short as Otto slammed into her, springing off the wall ramming Dekker with his shoulder. She swung the gun towards him but he batted it away, long-forgotten combat lessons with Wing coming back to him. He grabbed the security chief's wrist, twisted it and watched the gun clatter to the floor. Picking it up, he brought it around in a hard swinging, catching Dekker across the chief.

Taken completely by surprise, under assault from the person she thought least likely to assault her, Dekker fumbled and dropped her other gun.

Both Raven and Wing saw their opportunities and lunged forwards. Raven slammed a fist into her gut while Wing swept her feet out from under her.

Dekker scrambled backwards, grabbing her gun bringing it around to point at Raven. Otto slammed into her again, pushing both of them into the second Shroud.

"Disengage!" Otto yelled, and with a grinding vibration the clamps holding the two Shrouds together released their grip.

"It's no use, Malpense," Dekker snapped. She held up a remote control. "I press this button, and the whole Shroud drops like a rock. We're fifty thousand feet up" you would have about six minutes before you hit the water. HIVEmind would be destroyed."

Otto glared back at her defiance in his eyes. He slowly raised the pistol, aiming it at Dekker's chest.

"Drop the pistol, Malpense," Dekker sneered. "Or you die. I'll give you three seconds. One"

Thoughts were racing around Otto's head. He could sacrifice himself to save his friends. But what about HIVEmind? Six minutes. That's what Dekker had said. He could come up with something in six minutes. But he wouldn't be able to save himself.

"Two."

Otto raised the pistol again, taking a deep breath. From the other Shroud, ten feet away, his friends watched in horror.

"You don't have a chance," Dekker sneered. "If I die, you die with me." Otto stared back at her, his face like stone.

"I know," he replied, his voice like ice. Then he fired a shot. It hit Dekker in the shoulder. She spun away, pressing the button on the remote control. Otto swung forwards, grabbed onto the roof of the

Shroud and kicking Dekker out. He landed, staring at the remote, the red button, flashing, as if counting down.

He looked up, making eye contact with Laura for the last time.

Then the Shroud dropped from the sky, plummeting downwards from the sky.

* * *

><p>Cliffhanger? yeah, i think so :D

**It felt so good to finally type Otto confessing that he liked Laura. i waited six and a half books for it, and i waited a whole story to type it. I hoped you liked it. **

Again, massive thank you to Shnizel for your continued support! also thank you to WriteyStarkid, (please explain you name to meâ€" i'm confused), TheBreeze28487, Bhall1701, and all the guests who have reviewed this story

What if I just left the story here? would you kill me?

review please!

8. About Time

Alright, alright, you guys convinced me. I'll continue the story. Happy?

Otto, being the idiot he is, threw himself out of a Shroud in order to save HIVEmind and stop Chief Dekker, and now it's my job to bring him back to life. i lost several hours of sleep wondering how to do this, but i think i finally have a solution.

Second last chapter. Allons-y, Alonso's!

* * *

><p>Otto Malpense was going to die.<p>

The thought struck him like a lightning bolt as his friends disappeared from sight. He was going to die. At least he had told Laura how he felt. That was something.

The silence was unnerving as the Shroud plummeted towards the ocean below. There was no sound, except for a faint whistling of the air flying by. For a second, all Otto could do was stare outside.

Otto forced himself away from the door. It closed with a _thunk, _and then everything fell silent. He stumbl'd towards the cockpit of the shroud. He had six minutes, and he had probably wasted thirty seconds already.

"Focus, Malpense," he told him self, quickly climbing the ladder into the cockpit. Sure enough, HIVEmind was there, in a silver case, looking confused.

"Otto," he said. "It appears we are dropping towards the ocean at

terminal velocity. Would you care to explain?"

"We're in a shroud that Dekker locked down. We have no control and about five minutes until we hit the water," Otto explained hurriedly, rushing around the cockpit trying to find everything he needed.

He had his Blackbox. There was a transmitter on the Shroud. There were some fiber-optic cables. A screwdriver. He had everything. Otto set to work.

"What are you doing, Otto?" HIVEmind asked from the box as Otto hurriedly unscrewed the back to the Blackbox and began twisting a fiber-optic cable around inside of it. He then ran that cable to the box HIVEmind was contained inside of.

"I'm getting you out of here," Otto replied with determination on his feet. He looked up for a second as the screaming form of Dekker flew by outside the window. Getting back to his work, Otto started unscrewing HIVEmind's case.

"Could I help in any way?" HIVEmind asked.

"Can you connect to the Shroud's systems?"

"I'm afraid not."

"Then no," Otto said, finally opening the casing and twisting the optic cables around inside, making sure to disconnect the electromagnetic impulse so at least he had a bit of control over the fan. "How about now?"

"Yes," HIVEmind said. Otto smiled.

"Brilliant," he said. "Set up a wireless link to the other Shroud. Quickly."

As he said this Otto was already using the second fiber-optic cable to connect the Blackbox to the Shroud's core so he could transmit HIVEmind into the other Shroud.

"Otto, we have reached twenty-five thousand feet," HIVEmind said calmly. "And the connection is established."

"Give me a minute," Otto grunted. Then he thought for a second. "Actually, then seconds will do." His hands were flying over the wires of the Shroud. Finally he found the one he was looking for and connected it.

"Alright," he said. "Theoretically, this should transmit you up into the other Shroud, where they could take you back to H.I.V.E. If it goes, wrong, though, your data will be scrambled into the air—lost forever."

"It is a risk I am willing to take," HIVEmind informed him. "What about you?"

"I won't make it," Otto said silently. "That was my sacrifice. I'm killing myself to save you."

"Otto, I cannot let you—" HIVEmind began, but he was cut short as

Otto pressed a button on the Blackbox. HIVEmind's face dissolved and the blue lights in his case flickered out.

Otto was on his own. He checked the altimeter. Fifteen thousand feet to go. Fifteen thousand feet separated him from the bone-crushing impact that was waiting.

Fourteen thousand feet. Otto was about to sink to the floor when something caught his eye. It looked like a grappling hook, attached to a long rope. And idea started to form in his head. It was completely insane and would probably end in a painful death. Otto grinned. He loved these ideas.

Knowing his time was limited, he rushed forwards, grabbing the rope and jumping down into the cargo bay. He would need a lot more rope, plus about four Sleepers, a cannon, a grappler, some sort of bar or and a harness. The sleepers were easy to find, tucked away in a cabinet on the wall. He pulled the out and started to disassemble them, one eye on his work and the other one scanning the interior of the Shroud for what he needed. Thereâ€” propped against one wall, what looked like an AAI gun with a long, with barrel. Just what Otto needed. Part of him wondered why you would keep an anti aircraft gun inside of an aircraft.

He finished the work on the sleepers and rushed to the AAI gun, quickly stripping out the innards and throwing them carelessly on the floor. Almost without thinking, he was counting in his head: ten thousand feetâ€|. Nine thousand nine hundredâ€| nine thousand eight number and fiftyâ€|

His eyes raced around the cargo bay. He needed rope. A lot of rope. Fifty thousand feet of rope. Against one wall, he saw a thick coil of climbers rope and ran over the it, yanking it off the wall and tying it to the first coil of rope, the one that had a grappling hook on it. Otto knew it wasn't fifty thousand feetâ€”twenty thousand at bestâ€” but he had hopes that upon seeing him fall, his friends would have descended in their own Shroud to try to find him.

In his head, the seconds ticked down. _Five thousandâ€|. Four thousand, eight hundredâ€|_ the Shroud was falling faster now. He had a minute seconds at best. His eyes flew over the objects in the shroud until he found the two last parts of his design: a grappler unit and a short metal bar. He quickly opened up the grappler unit and pulled out the winch mechanism. His hands flew, using the last of his rope to attach the winch to the metal bar and the metal bar to the AAI cannon barrel. This would, in theory, pull him up.

Ten seconds left. Otto, acting with a frenzied urgency now, hit the button to open up the Shroud's ramp. It clanked open, far to slowly. Dragging the device over to the opening, Otto made the mistake of looking down. He had five seconds left. Five seconds to live.

He pressed the button on the nearest sleeper gun and it fired, simultaneously setting off the other sleepers and pushing his grappling hook up at incredible speeds. Otto looked upâ€” better than looking downâ€” and was hugely relieved to see the rope flying towards the little black dot that was a Shroud.

There wasn't time to wait for it to attach. Otto hit the button on the grappler, and it began to turn the bar, pulling in the rope. Otto

held his breath. The line went taunt. That meant it was now holding on to Shroud above him.

And then his Shroud hit the water.

* * *

><p>Laura had sunk down into a sitting position on the floor of the Shroud and dissolved into tears. Covering her eyes with her hands, she curled into a little ball cried, sobs shaking her body. She was never going to see him again. The last image of him played through her mind. Him, standing completely still in the Shroud, his expression completely blank but his eyes so full of grief they punctured her heart. He had sacrificed himself for her.<p>

Shelby leant down, but couldn't think of anything to say. She was too grief stricken to think, still in shock that her last glimpse of Ottoâ€” the last she was ever going to see of himâ€” had happened just a moment ago. A flash of blue caught her attention, and she looked to the side of the cockpit to see HIVEmind blink into existence on the monitor. If A.I's could look sad, this one sure did. His wire-frame head was bowed and his mouth was slightly frowning.

Wing stood, stock-still, arms folded behind his back, jaw tightly clenched. He had just lost his best friend. His first friend. He would never forgive himself for not being there when Otto needed him.

No one noticed the slight thunk that came from below the Shroud, so lost in grief they were. Even Raven and Nero, who had seen and felt their fare share of deaths over the years, were deeply upset.

"We need to leave," Raven said softly. Outside the window, the ocean was suddenly lit up with fire.

"That would be Mr. Malâ€” Otto's doing, I presume?" Nero said, deciding he could call the boy by his first name, out of respect.

"H-he s-saved HIVEmind and b-blew them up as well," Laura hiccupped, before breaking down into more uncontrollable sobs. Raven showed no emotion on her face, but she held her katana's so tightly her knuckles were white.

And then the hatch leading from the cargo bay popped open. No one but raven noticed a head poke up, before a body followed. She smirked as she recognized the person.

"What are you smiling at?" Shelby demanded. "Is something funny?"

Raven pointed behind her back as Otto spoke up. "Did someone die or something?"

Wing spun around, surprised. His eyes widened even more as he saw Otto standing there, a lopsided grin on his face. His hands were raw and he was limping slightly, but he was very much alive. Wing started forwards, but was beat by Laura, who ran towards Otto and threw herself into his arms, pressing her lips against his

violently.

"Well," Shelby said, watching the two kiss. "It's about time."

* * *

><p>What did you guys think? to far-fetched? I couldn't think of anything else.

**I contemplated leaving the story here and letting you guys imagine what happens next, but I've decided to write an Epilogue, that will probably be really short and really fluffy, mostly focusing on Otto and Laura, but if you want another couple in there, drop a review, and i will happily involve them. **

Thank you guys for reading!

9. Epilogue

**Well, here it is. the last chapter to my not-so-great story. As of right now, i finished of with twenty-seven reviews, which far exceeds my original goal of ten. you guys are the best! Thanks to every single one of you guys who reviewed: Writey Starkid, (still don't understand the name) Shnizel, TheBreeze28487, BHall1701, Kukipye, and all the guests who i can't name. Special thanks to the one guest who gave me the idea for this chapter. **

**It's relatively short (868 words)â€" but that's mainly because I cannot, for the life of me, write good fluff, and that's all this chapter was suppose to be. So forgive me, bear with it, and enjoy the last chapter. **

Allons-y!

* * *

><p>"Did we ever find Dekker?" Raven asked, sinking into the chair opposite to Nero's, on the other side of the desk. The bullet Dekker had shot into her thigh was still sore, but a lot less after medical attention and a good nights sleep.<p>

"I'm afraid not," Nero grimaced. "The impact would have killed her, and then the sharks would have eaten her."

"Pity." Ravens eyes flashed. "I had something slower and more painful planned out for her."

"I believe we all did, Natalya," Nero agreed. "Unfortunately, Dekker had no soul, so it would be quite impossible to bring her back to life."

"We can do that?" Raven asked, shocked. She knew H.I.V.E had some high-end technology, but bringing people back to life seemed a bit out of their league. Nero didn't answer, just looked at her with a glint of humor in his eyes.

"Thank you again for rescuing me, Natalya," Nero said. "I owe you my life. Again."

"It wasn't just me," Raven said modestly. "The students helped a lot. Otto sacrificed his life for us. Well, he was willing to."

"I', still shocked he managed to survive," Nero smiled. "Actually, no, I'm not. The boy is far too stubborn to die."

"Agreed," Raven nodded. "Anyway, I should be going. Enemies to kill, people to intimidate, students to set in line."

"Right back to work, then," Nero smiled. "And Natalyaâ€|" they held eye contact. "Good luck."

It wasn't what she was hoping to hear, but as they stared into each other's eyes, blue into brown, an unspoken message seemed to pass through, something they both knew deep down, but were too scared to admit on the surface.

Wing's foot smashed against the punching bag. Next came three quick fists, followed by another roundhouse kick that sent the bag flying. He was raised not to show emotions, but now they were breaking through the surface. He had almost let his friend die, and he had been helpless to stop it.

"Hey," came a soft voice from behind him. "I though I might find you here." Wing spun around to find Shelby standing a few feet away, smiling softly.

"Oh," he said. "Hello."

"Did the punching bag insult your family?" Shelby asked. "You looked like you were trying to kill it."

"Noâ€"yesâ€"no," Wing stuttered. Very unlike him. He had trouble putting his emotions in words. "I feel like Otto would have died, and I did nothing."

Shelby took his hand and leaned closer. "Don't you dare die," she told him. "I care too much about you. I wouldn't be able to be happy without you."

"It does not change the fact that I almost let Otto die," he said. Shelby looked at him for a second.

"But he didn't die," she said. "So what's the point in worrying about it if it didn't happen?"

Wing was going to answer, but Shelby cut him off by kissing him. He froze, before responding, happily wrapping his arms around her and pulling her close.

"I'm glad you're here, Wing," Shelby whispered when they pulled apart, resting her forehead on his.

"Me too, Shelby," Wing said. "I'm glad I have you."

"Hi," Otto said, sitting down in the chair opposite to Laura in the accommodation block. She had a far away look on his face.

"Oh," she said, jumping slightly. "Hey."

"What are you thinking about?" Otto asked, concerned.

"You almost died," Laura said, meeting his eyes. "You were prepared to kill yourself to save an A.I. Why?"

"Partly because H.I.V.E needs him," Otto told her, breaking eyes contact before he said the next part. "And partly because you like him so much." His cheeks flushed red when he said this.

"You honestly thought I cared more about an A.I then I did about you?" Laura asked. Otto shrugged.

"Partially," he nodded. "But also because I wasn't thinking about that at the time. I just wanted to protect you guys from Dekker."

"So you killed yourself to save us," Laura concluded. Otto nodded, embarrassed. Laura stood up and slid into the seat next to him. She took his hand and kissed him. Every thought fled from his mind when their lips touched. It felt so right, so perfect.

"Otto Malpense, that is the single dumbest, heroic and sweetest thing I have ever heard of anyone doing," Laura said, pulling away from him.

"I should have told you the first day I met you," Otto said, still holding her hands, knowing people were probably staring at them but not caring at all. "I think about all the times I've almost died, all the times you've almost diedâ€¦ it was dumb of me not to tell you."

"But we're still alive," Laura said. "And now I do know."

"Good," Otto smiled, looking straight into her eyes. "What were you thinking when you saw me fall in the Shroud?" he asked. Laura pursed her lips.

"I was thinkingâ€¦. I never got to tell you that loved you back," she said after a long pause. Otto's smile grew.

"Well, I'm still alive," he said. "So now you have your chance." Laura chuckled slightly.

"Otto Malpense, I love you," she said, leaning forwards to kiss him again.

* * *

><p>And that, readers and reviewers, brings the story to an end. I have another fanfic planned, but it's not about H.I.V.E, so i probably wont have any H.I.V.E related stuff up for a while. Sorry!

**This story did a lot better and was a lot longer than i originally planned. Thank you guys for sticking with me that whole time. **

I would ask you guys to review, but it's over now, so no need. Thank you everyone who read it. You guys are the best.

End
file.